the weekly
Standard

OCTOBER 16, 1995 $2.95

TRAVESTY

Fred Barnes • Peter Collier & David Horowitz
John J. DiIulio, Jr. • Gertrude Himmelfarb • William Kristol
Matt Labash • John Podhoretz • David Tell

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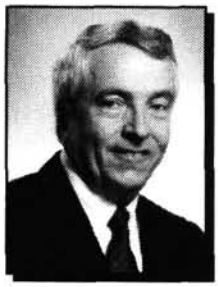

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the weekly Standard

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Correspondence

They Took Abortion Seriously

In "Taking Abortion Seriously" (Sept. 25), David Tell and the editors perceptively emphasize President Clinton's reference to the unborn as "the children." Noting that an "endangered bird in a national forest" now receives more legal protection than an unborn child, Tell criticizes those who "turn away" from confronting the barbaric reality of the abortion act.

I take issue with your suggestion that the Republican party should not "allow so much of its energy and attention to be absorbed, as it now is, in the effort to maintain the Republican language on abortion, word for word." His curious logic urges the Republican party to adopt a "vigorously pro-life" platform while magically diminishing the "energy and attention" devoted to preserving the current platform.

I also take issue with the implication that the Republican pro-life platform has "done nothing" to stop abortions, absent "other efforts." On the contrary. The moral propositions embedded in the current platform motivate citizens to engage in constructive pro-life measures. For example, pro-lifers supply ob/gyns with "start-to-finish moral education." If platform ideas have consequences, then the Republican abortion plank has already saved the lives of unborn children.

FAITH WHITTLESEY
LAKE WALES, FL

Let me get this straight: your "conservative" magazine favors the federal government telling physicians what medical procedure they should use in dealing with a pregnant woman facing an unintended pregnancy?

Your "conservative" magazine believes that the Republican position favoring tampering with the Constitution to make abortion illegal is sound?

You think that ethical issues that elude consensus even among the major denominations can best be handled by government?

Forget my subscription. I can get this sort of critical thinking from listening to a Bob Dornan tirade on C-SPAN.

BILL HAMILTON
WASHINGTON, DC

Your editorial on abortion is an abomination. This kind of fulminating religious moralizing should have no place in a magazine of political opinion. Many conservatives support freedom of choice precisely because they feel the government has no business interfering in a woman's private decision and no business dictating personal moral choices.

There is a great divide on the questions of when life begins, the status of a fetus, and the morality of abortion. People of one view have the right to try to persuade others to change their minds; they do not have the right to force their moral choices on others.

ALEX NACHT
NEW YORK, NY

Uptown Luddites

It was hard for me to believe we were living in the same apartment building when I read Christopher Caldwell's Casual ("Living With Naomi Wolf," Sept. 25). Where he saw a desk staff that was "the meanest, laziest, most ill-mannered . . . in the city," I and hundreds of other Kennedy-Warren residents saw a kind, thoughtful staff so beloved that we held a packed meeting to protest their removal.

In like manner, where Caldwell saw a run-down local market, inexplicably preferred over a proposed new "high-quality supermarket," the neighborhood saw an excellent, clean, moderately priced store threatened by a grocery chain which would have offered only certain types of food, and perhaps driven out our friendly local establishment. (Past tense used, because the neighborhood protest has apparently succeeded.)

The article's premise, that the local elites prefer "*lousier* services," is amusing. A friendly staff who knows us is the feature most valued in this grand old building, replete with atmosphere, but innocent of modern improvements.

JULIA B. FORAKER
WASHINGTON, DC

In Defense of NASA

In "The Final Frontier: Space Yes, NASA No" (Sept. 25), Martin Sieff props up his case by belaboring NASA's past and conveniently sweeping under the rug all that has happened since Daniel Goldin became Administrator.

Sieff complains that Goldin "is no different from his predecessor," and "has yet to start or complete a single mission." Absolutely dead wrong. There's a revolution underway at NASA. Goldin's rallying cry is "faster, better, cheaper." Goldin has ended persistent cost overruns, reworked the space station so it's on-time and on-budget, cut overall spending 10 percent, eliminated 22,000 civil service and contractor jobs, and completely upended the planetary science division.

Unfortunately, all these far-reaching changes at NASA seem to have evaded Sieff's pen.

BILL LIVINGSTONE
WASHINGTON, DC

No Sweeteners for the AARP

It is true that the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has met and will continue to meet with the GOP leadership on proposed changes in Medicare and other issues of concern to older Americans. But Fred Barnes's assertion ("Shy and Retiring," Sept. 25) that the Association has somehow been neutralized in what may be the most important debate facing Americans of all ages in many years is not true.

Barnes's implication that there are "sweeteners" for AARP in the Republican plan that will take AARP out of the picture is ludicrous. He is also mistaken about our largest single source of revenue—our membership dues—which accounted for 31 percent of total income.

We remain concerned that the proposed $270 billion in savings is far beyond what Medicare can absorb without jeopardizing the program in terms of access and quality. AARP agrees that deficit reduction is important, but not at the risk of eroding Medicare's promise of financial protection. We believe Congress must address Medicare in two steps. First, assure its solvency for the next decade, and, second, assure the long-term stability of the program.

HORACE B. DEETS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AARP
WASHINGTON, DC

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The computer kid. While most University of Texas freshmen were hanging out at the student union, he was back at the dorm. Hatching plans for an all out assault on the powerful computer industry. His strategy was shockingly simple. Yet revolutionary at the time. Cut out the high priced dealers. Sell customized PCs directly to the people. At prices well below retail. With $1,000 in savings he formed *Dell Computer* in 1984. Today, it's a $3 billion global business. And he's the longest tenured CEO in the PC industry. At the ripe old age of thirty. **Michael Dell borrowed his first copy of Forbes from his mother in 1978.**

Forbes

CAPITALIST TOOL

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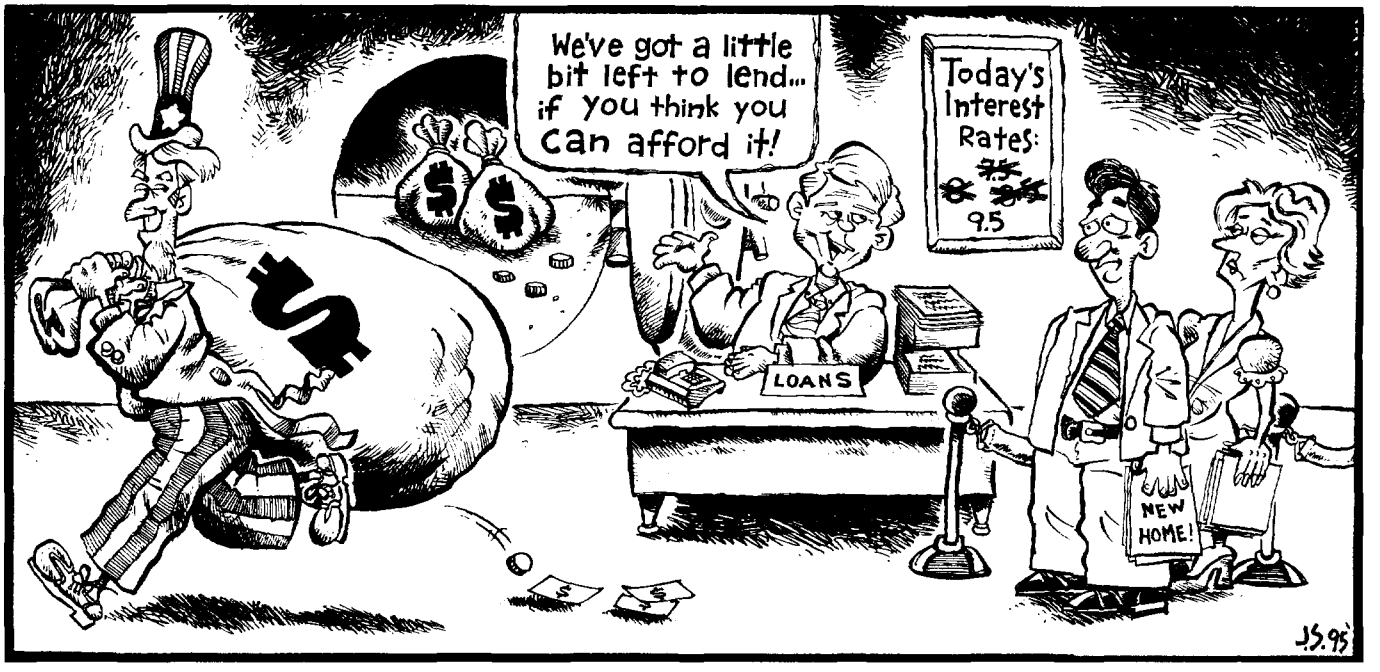

A balanced budget would save Americans 10 years of mortgage payments. Think what that would do for *your* standard of living.

Interest rates are a factor of demand. When government deficits prevail, drying up the credit pool, interest rates remain high. Government crowds out the private sector and bids for capital regardless of the economic conditions or the level of interest rates. A balanced budget will mean a sharp reduction in interest rates. That translates to a savings of nearly 10 years in mortgage payments if interest rates decline by only one-third. Think of the economic purchasing power added to our economy. Think about the millions of jobs it would create. The benefits would be staggering.

Who benefits from Uncle Sam's debt?

Those who still believe government spending stimulates the economy are living in a world existing only in theory. At times, 40 percent of the national debt is held by non-American investors. This means we export more than $100 billion in interest expenditures that *never* stimulate the domestic economy. For example, the Japanese made more on their investments in the United States over the past decade than they did off of their trade surplus.

It's time the lies stop. It's time Congress stops promising the moon while blocking the sunlight of personal economic freedom and opportunity. Government cannot manage every aspect of our economy. Russia tried and look what happened. It's time for honesty, not exaggerated rhetoric. The people deserve more.

For more information on the Princeton Proposal for tax reform & economic growth, contact:

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the weekly Standard

JOHNNIE COCHRAN'S AMERICA

TRAVESTY

He got away with it. O.J. is free to drink his celebratory champagne, despite the mountain of circumstantial evidence that, one night in June 1994, he did corner and knife to death his ex-wife and a young man who chanced upon the scene.

Simpson is a black man, of course, and the question whether a mostly black, inner-city jury willfully ignored the evidence and voted to acquit solely on the basis of race—to "nullify" a case brought by what that jury believed to be an illegitimate, racist authority—is inevitable. It happens sometimes. More than sometimes, in fact, and more and more frequently. The Simpson jury's formal consideration of nine months of testimony and argument took less than four hours. How diligently did they do their job there at the end, in that small chamber outside the courtroom?

At her Wednesday press conference, juror Brenda Moran needed a whispered interruption from her lawyer before she remembered to insist that her own vote wasn't assured until after closing arguments. Gina Rossborough, appearing on *Oprah*, admitted that she *entered* jury service with a "reasonable doubt" of guilt and heard nothing—*nothing!*—that failed to reinforce that preconception. Another juror, Lionel "Lon" Cryer, is a former Black Panther party member; he's the man, left unchallenged by the prosecution during jury selection last November, who gave the Simpson table a raised-fist salute after the verdict was read. If Johnnie Cochran's client had been white, could this jury have so quickly, even eagerly, dispatched the evidence and accepted as plausible the existence of a massive police conspiracy to frame an innocent man? No.

And yet. When the plea is innocent, the defense in a criminal trial always, at least implicitly, alleges that the state is engaged in a conspiracy of some sort. They have the wrong man, and—wittingly or not—they are attempting to convict him anyway. For a true-believing defense attorney like Alan Dershowitz, such "did he do it" questions recede in significance before the overriding responsibility of the sovereign power to demonstrate that its case against an individual is virtually perfect. In this purist view, the *prosecution* is principally on trial, not the defendant. And when the defense succeeds in persuading a jury that impeccably obtained evidence is the only salient measure of justice (thanks for nothing, Judge Ito) then that jury will be much more likely to acquit.

Which is what appears to have happened in the Simpson trial. The case for guilt was overwhelming and convincing. But it was not flawless. As only a very rich man's multi-million-dollar defense campaign could have made clear, the original Los Angeles Police Department search of O.J.'s Rockingham Avenue estate may have been unconstitutional. The detectives' claim that he was not a suspect at the time it was conducted, obviously asserted to protect crucial evidence, was unbelievable. The blood evidence was handled sloppily, and the chain of custody for that evidence was broken. Not to mention the fact that two men in that chain of custody seem to have perjured themselves during the trial.

It was not "reasonable," in our view, for the jury to have doubts about whether Orenthal James Simpson butchered two people in June 1994. Several jurors have now revealed that in their eyes Simpson is undoubtedly innocent, not just technically "not guilty," a judg-

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ment that strikes us as the very opposite of reasonable. Ms. Moran, for example, says that she and her colleagues thought the uncontested evidence that O.J. Simpson was a vicious wife-beater, information clearly probative about motive and character, was a total "waste of time." That's disgraceful. And the idea that corrupted evidence was the product not of chaos in the aftermath of a brutal double murder, or of isolated official incompetence and dishonesty, but resulted from a deliberate conspiracy by the City of Los Angeles and the State of California—that's what you have to believe if you think O.J. didn't do it—is naive. To say the least.

But the fact remains that black juries in the United States send black men to prison for violent crimes all the time, without controversy. Even wealthy black men, like Mike Tyson, do not necessarily escape justice. Sad but true, it may simply be that a well-funded Simpson defense managed to turn the trial into a referendum on prosecutorial perfection, and the prosecution lost. Until we know more about what went on in the deliberation room, the "race card" case against the Simpson jury is incomplete.

Not so the case against Johnnie Cochran and his millions of admirers, a clear majority of black Americans, according to all available polls.

Almost invariably these days, when a public spectacle is created by allegations of official conspiracy against a black person involved in a judicial proceeding, some section of black America can be counted on to stick its thumb in the eye of respectable opinion, which holds that the alleged conspiracy is groundless. "Tawana told the truth," remember? "Free Mike Tyson." Until now, it has always been possible at least to *pretend* that this uncivic tweaking of common sense—to say nothing of the horrifying tribalism and race hatred it suggests—is restricted to a tiny class of professional provocateurs, like Al Sharpton or Louis Farrakhan.

But no more. Comes now Johnnie Cochran, suddenly the nation's leading criminal defense attorney. He uses Fruit of Islam bodyguards the night before Yom Kippur. He does legal work for Snoop Doggy Dogg and Reginald Denny's rioting assailants. He invokes Hitler. He asks the Simpson jury—and his national television audience, more significantly—to help "send a message" about racism. He contends, on last Wednesday's *Larry King*, that "totalitarianism" is alive and well on this continent.

And he is not marginal. The people whose support and exultation he delights in are not some mob in Crown Heights. They are the Congressional Black Caucus. They are students at Howard and Morehouse, the cream of black America's next generation, who explode in joy at a verdict that probably turns a murderer loose and, they think, ironically confirms their judgment that American justice is a racist fraud. Mr. Cochran, incidentally, says "I love America." But he doesn't. Do his fans?

All too typically, the suits and ties of institutional America are struck dumb by the meaning of the Simpson verdict and the black reaction it inspires. We must "respect the jury system," we are told. The "best thing" we can do is put this behind us and move on. But how the hell are we supposed to do that? Move on to what?

There is an awful caution in all this for conservatives, so many of us full of yeasty bromides about restoring the stolen power of the federal government to its rightful owners in "civil society." The Los Angeles Police Department, and the Simpson jury, and those whooping inner-city crowds and college students are civil society, too, after all.

"We know what to do out here, beyond the Beltway," goes the devolutionary refrain. Maybe we do. But then again, in the aftermath of the Simpson verdict, maybe we really don't.

—David Tell, for the Editors

100,000 O.J. Simpsons

by John J. Dilulio, Jr.

Where were you when the O.J. verdict came in? I was at a conference in Albany, New York, with over a hundred of the Empire State's top criminal-justice officials—prosecutors, police, probation and parole chiefs. I made sure to finish my speech before 1:00 p.m. so that we could herd ourselves in front of the televisions specially placed for the event in the hotel lobby. In came the verdict.

What the rest of America saw later that day in the broken-hearted, demoralized reaction of L.A. County prosecutor Chris Darden, I saw up close and personal in the sadly stoic black, white, and brown faces of people who loathe crime, love justice, and hate it when the system fails to honor their best efforts. Later that day, one veteran official sighed, "There's 100,000 O.J.s. We've reached the point where the system is rigged to let murderers, and not just rich ones, escape justice."

Forget about the Bronco. Forget Cochran, Fuhrman, and race. Forget Judge Ito's bizarre deci-

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sions on everything from putting sensationalizing cameras in the courtroom to putting pillow-talking conjugal visitors in the jurors' bedrooms. Forget D.A. Gil Garcetti's fateful decision to hold the trial (and the media) in a venue closer to his own camera-ready address, to permit the effective criterion in jury selection to be a racism-charge-proof verdict, and to declare, virtually on day one of the process, that no matter what the verdict, the People would not seek the death penalty for one of the most brutal double-murders in L.A. County's history. Finally, never mind the anemic record of Garcetti's office in high-visibility cases. (One of the last such cases won in L.A. was against Zsa Zsa Gabor for slapping a traffic cop in the face.)

Forget about everything except the fact that two innocent people were murdered in cold blood and no one has yet been brought to justice—arrested, convicted, imprisoned, or executed—for the heinous crime. If you think about it that way, then for all its eccentric aspects and bizarre twists and turns, what is ultimately so extraordinary about the outcome of the O.J. case is how ordinary it is.

For starters, America has 3,000 counties, but over half of all murders occur in the 75 largest ones, including L.A. Since 1977, about 400,000 people have been murdered in this country. But for all that killing, in 1993 only 2,713 convicted murderers were on death row. Between 1977 and 1993, a total of 226 killers were executed. In some states, three times as many people have been released from death row by commutations or judicial reversals as have been executed.

Of course, convicted murderers still do go to prison, but not for as long as you might suppose. On average, murderers released from prison in 1992 had spent just 5.9 years behind bars (that's "jail credits"—time spent awaiting trial and during trial—plus actual prison time) on sentences of 12.4 years. Don't get me started on their "conditions of confinement"—big-screen televisions to watch the O.J. trial, you name it. Let's just say the American Civil Liberties Union has done its work well.

And guess what? About a third of those convicted of murder are under community-based legal "supervision"—on probation, parole, or pretrial release-at the very moment they kill. Had the system ever actually bothered to nail him for beating Nicole, O.J. would have been just another "supervised felon" accused of murdering an ex-wife whom he had previously battered.

Indeed, each year women experience nearly 600,000 violent victimizations at the hands of male intimates, including former boyfriends and husbands. In 1992 alone, an estimated 1,432 females were killed by intimates. Eighty percent of all murder victims are killed by relatives, ex-spouses, friends, or acquaintances. Forty-five percent of family murder victims are female. Poor Ron Goldman was simply caught in an all-too-common murderous crossfire.

The O.J. case was typical in other ways, too. For example, about two-thirds of all murder trials involving defendants accused of murdering a family member drag on for more than six months. (Nonetheless, most juries, including most sequestered ones, take longer to bring in a verdict than the shameful speed with which the Simpson panel deliberated.) In 61 percent of all murder cases, the defendant pleads not guilty. And in four or five out of 10 cases, the accused murderer who doesn't plead guilty walks free.

Conservatives like to claim that numbers like these spring from over a generation's worth of activist court decisions that force police to handle suspects with kid gloves, render legally inadmissible crucial evidence unless every last legal technicality is followed, and permit both accused criminals and long-time prisoners to clog the system with frivolous litigation and endless appeals.

They're basically right, but another reason for the revolving-door system is that many big-city prosecutors are very wary of controversy and don't seek the death penalty if they can help it, least of all in racially charged cases. Between the time when the Supreme Court declared the death penalty unconstitutional in

Illustrations by Sean Delonas

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1972 and reinstated it in 1976, murder cases fell into the plea-bargaining pit along with other violent crimes. These prosecutors do their best, but their best inevitably amounts to doing a little deterrence on the cheap, not a lot of justice at great effort and financial cost. The only truly extraordinary thing about the O.J. trial was that L.A. County invested so much personnel and money in trying to convict an accused murderer on all major charges.

So the horrible fact that the Browns and the Goldmans will now probably live the rest of their lives without anyone being convicted and sentenced for the murder of their loved ones is but one example of how we have institutionalized crime without punishment in America, even for homicide—even in cases where the circumstantial evidence seems overwhelming, the physical evidence rings conclusive, and the reasonable doubt standard is gorged. Are there 100,000 cases out there where the families of murder victims have received little or no justice? At least. Tragically, Nicole, Ron, and their families have plenty of company.

Princeton University Professor John J. DiIulio, Jr. is director of the Brookings Institution's Center for Public Management and adjunct fellow at the Manhattan Institute.

Yes, We Do Understand

by John Podhoretz

For whites, the racial gulf in America has never felt so wide these past 20 years or more—how can most American blacks believe (or say they believe) that O.J. Simpson is innocent of a crime science tells us there is a one-in-a-billion chance he did not commit? What is to be done?

You know perfectly well what is to be done. We—that is, we upper-middle-class whites—must, by a process of study and observation, come to *understand*. And it will be "white" institutions, from the Ford Foundation to the *New York Times* to the television networks to America's corporations, that will insist on fostering this *understanding*. *Understanding* has become a primary goal of our education system, and more time (and foundation money) has been spent devising curricula to teach children *understanding* than on anything else in recent memory. On violent television programs aimed at 4-year-olds, lessons in *understanding* are taught alongside Thai kickboxing. Across the country, officials at corporations are giving up their Saturday golf to attend diversity seminars at which they are indoctrinated in the religion of *understanding*.

This religion has deeper roots than the civil-rights movement. One of the key notions of the 20th century is that we can solve problems through the judicious application of understanding. The present-day gospel of "racial outreach" is very much like two of the 20th century's most persistent gospels—peace processes and psychoanalysis. All three are ongoing efforts at understanding, whose purpose is to reach concord through sweet reason and sheer doggedness. They are undertaken with no notion of how long they might take or whether they will conclude happily. And they usually become entirely self-referential.

During most peace processes, the players confuse the "process," which has little meaning, with "peace," which is achieved not on paper but in the hearts and souls of those who are at war. The same is true of psychoanalysis, where the interplay between doctor and patient itself becomes the process by which the patient may be healed.

So it is with race relations. For those who seek harmony across the color line, the "relations" part of America's race-relations crisis is often viewed as a solution in itself. And so, in the wake of the O.J. Simpson verdict, it will be time yet again for whites to *understand*. Time again to raise white consciousness about the tragic life and history of African-Americans.

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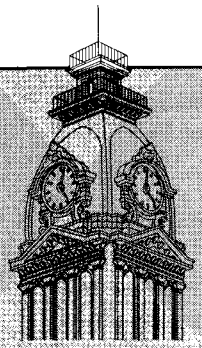

Views From Hillsdale College

Government's Dirty Little Secret

New leadership sits on Capitol Hill, indicative that voters want a change. But the current Administration is fighting change. They'll argue that supporting assistance programs is what America needs most. Don't they know that raising taxes won't make the problem of a $4 trillion national debt go away? America needs to figure out how to turn away from the dead politics of the past and "deinvent government."

Since the days of the New Deal, Americans have grown more dependent on government assistance than are teenagers on their parents. Eventually, we prepare our teens to lead independent, adult lives; but the addictive cycle of government welfare swallows whole families for generations.

And are you aware of government's dirty little secret? It is this: *Federal, state and local bureaucracies in the United States consume over 45 percent of our national income.* Your hard-earned dollars are taken to promote government programs that foster unemployment, educational mediocrity and price regulations, among other problems.

It's ironic: In a country that fought so hard to earn and maintain independence, our government continues to confiscate our freedoms to support nationally destructive habits.

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Conferences will be convened. Editors will commission stories about the murder of Emmit Till and its impact on black public opinion 40 years later. Michael Lerner and Cornel West will do another book together, co-host a TV show, win MacArthur Foundation genius grants. The mutual heat of blacks and whites will allow us to weld a new consensus, or so says Frank Rich, the most intelligent and provocative left-wing columnist in the country: "I hope that some of the anger on all sides, mine included, will linger a bit, red-hot yet controlled, as a prod to find our way out of this country's racial morass."

For the American liberal establishment, this has become the stock response after a public outrage that divides Americans by color. Did black rioters do $1 billion worth of damage in Los Angeles after the acquittal of four cops in the Rodney King beating? Did those riots say something about the death of civil culture in poor black neighborhoods—$250 million worth of destruction per acquittal? No, it remained a tale of police brutality and racism run amok—*and we have to understand.*

Did gang members go on a murderous rampage through the Brooklyn neighborhood of Crown Heights after a car driven by a Hasid spun out of control and killed a 7 year-old black boy? Was the obvious killer of the Australian Hasid who was murdered during that pogrom set free by a predominantly black jury? Time for outreach in Crown Heights—*the Hasidim have to understand.*

The Tawana Brawley hoax, the reelection of Marion Barry, the Liberty City riots in Miami, the mere fact that an anti-Semitic psychotic like Louis Farrakhan continues to strut his hour upon the public stage in the United States—the response is inevitably the same. Sessions between white and black leaders, moving stories of friendship between a former racist and a Black Panther broadcast on *CBS Sunday Morning*, more conferences, NPR reports of role-playing games between black kids and white kids. The fetishizing of race relations continues. According to this civil religion, race relations must be tended, nurtured, and never left to their own devices, otherwise where will we be?

Where we will be is no different from where we are right now. For the gospel of *understanding* will not, cannot, work in this case. I *understand* why blacks—a gut-wrenching 90 percent of them, according to one poll—are happy with the Simpson verdict. I understand that blacks think either a) that he was framed by Mark Fuhrman and many fellow conspirators, or b) that the murder of two people is less important than "sending a message" to the Los Angeles police department and to white America in general.

The affront in the Simpson case is that a sizeable, definable minority in the United States has either fallen victim to a demented politics of conspiracy or believes that Mark Fuhrman's sociopathological use of the word "nigger" justifies the release of a man who nearly decapitated the mother of his children and then slaughtered the bystander who showed up at her door to deliver her forgotten sunglasses. Though I have always resisted Andrew Hacker's idea that America is divided into two nations, it is difficult to deny it in the wake of the Simpson verdict. Is black America so lost in its own resentment that it no longer has the capacity to feel empathy for the family of Ronald Goldman as they wept in that courtroom with the knowledge that the world saw the murderer of their son, their brother, their beloved boy, go free—that they feel closer kinship to a killer because of his skin color than to the killer's victims?

I can understand how this has happened. But that understanding makes me sick, and it makes me furious, and it makes me ashamed to be an American for the first time in my life. ♦

THE SHAME OF LANCE ITO

by Fred Barnes

In Washington, D.C., last August, a robber held up a McDonald's near Capitol Hill and killed three employees. A fourth was saved only because the robber's gun was empty when he aimed at her and twice pulled the trigger. The assailant fled in the car of one of the victims. Hours later, police arrested a suspect and found a money wrapper from the McDonald's safe in his pants pocket. Despite this compelling evidence, plus an eyewitness, the attorney for the suspect requested that he be released to the custody of a third party. There's a "paucity of information . . . and evidence," the lawyer said. Besides, there was only one eyewitness—the employee who survived—and she didn't see the three killings, only heard them.

There's a parallel here with the O.J. Simpson trial in Los Angeles. Many of today's defense lawyers, in routine cases or big ones, are willing to make any argument, no matter how shameless or outrageous, on behalf of their clients. They're out of control. Truth

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and the safety of the community—those are ignored, totally.

There's also a significant difference between the two cases. In Washington, the judge coolly brushed aside the defense lawyer's argument and ordered the defendant held without bond. In L.A., Judge Lance Ito went along complaisantly with the schemes and ploys of Johnnie Cochran and the rest of the O.J. defense team. And that's what doomed the prosecution of Simpson.

"I blame the judge more than I blame the defense lawyers," says Floyd Abrams, the prominent New York lawyer and First Amendment expert. "Lawyers tend to do what they can get away with. The ultimate blame falls on Judge Ito."

Start with the question of evidence allegedly planted by detective Mark Fuhrman or other LAPD officers. Cochran was allowed to pursue that matter relentlessly, though he hadn't offered a single shred of proof indicating that anything—a glove, maybe, or a sock—might have been planted. Cochran "never offered any evidence [of this] at the beginning, the middle, or the end" of the trial, notes Plato Cacheris, the Washington attorney who defended CIA spy Aldrich Ames and Fawn Hall. But what Cochran *was* able to show was that Fuhrman is a racist, and thus had a motive for framing Simpson. This undercut the entire prosecution case.

Under normal procedure, a judge would have required a "proffer" from defense attorneys. In it, they would have laid out their grounds, including some factual basis, for believing evidence was fabricated. If the judge accepted their argument, defense lawyers would be permitted to ask questions about, among other things, the motive of police for planting evidence. But if the judge found defense lawyers had nothing but an unproven theory, they wouldn't be allowed to pursue the matter. Fuhrman's racism would have been out of bounds.

Ito didn't bother with this procedure. He simply let Simpson's lawyers belabor the issue of planted evidence without any proffer, without any showing of a factual basis. "Most judges would not have permitted this," says Cacheris. "They had no evidence." Ito allowed Cochran to put Kathleen Bell on the stand to testify about incriminating comments she'd heard Fuhrman make about concocting charges against blacks and wanting to kill all of them. The prosecution never recovered. "I believe that's what swayed the jury," says former federal prosecutor John Stein. In fact, several jury members said they believed evidence had been planted.

Oddly, Ito ruled separately that the defense could not play a taped conversation with Fuhrman in which he had confided to a screenwriter that he'd actually

planted evidence in other cases. Ito said Cochran had failed to produce any information that such a thing might have happened.

Ito also rolled over for Simpson's lawyers on the preposterous claim that Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman might have been killed by Colombian drug dealers angry at Nicole's druggie friend, Faye Resnick, for not paying her debts. Cochran provided no basis for this, yet Ito permitted him to pepper a police detective with hypothetical questions about it for two days—as the jury listened to every word. "Those questions went too far," says Abrams. "And the repetition of this shouldn't have been allowed." Prosecutor Marcia Clark called the theory "another sinister innuendo they throw up that has absolutely no basis in fact." But Ito allowed it, and thus the jury heard an alternative theory of the crime that exonerated Simpson.

Finally, there was Cochran's summation, in which he urged jurors to use the case not to judge Simpson but to send a message that they wouldn't tolerate racism. He likened Fuhrman to Hitler. The jurors must "continue to fight to expose hate and genocidal racism and these tendencies," Cochran said. "If you don't speak out, if you don't stand up, if you don't do what's right, this kind of conduct will continue on forever."

It was powerful stuff, a baldfaced pitch for the jury to ignore Simpson's guilt or innocence and punish the police for racism. "Nine out of 10 judges would not have permitted the appeal to jury nullification," says Cacheris. But Ito did.

As it turned out, the prosecution may have lost the case even before any testimony was heard. At the outset, Ito noted his wife is a police officer and said he'd recuse himself if either side wished. Neither did. The prosecution didn't know what it was in for. ♦

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Listening to O.J.'s Fans

by Matt Labash

It's horrifying, really, you just have to put it out of your mind, justice has been served, and now the healing can begin. That was what should follow the O.J. Simpson verdict, according to the practitioners of African-American talk radio in the District of Columbia.

"No sense in denying it, America," said Joe Madison of WRC radio in Washington. "Might as well get used to it. Might as well face it. You got a problem. You got a problem not only with Mark Fuhrman, but all of his buddies who are deciding to go down with him. If you look close enough, you've got a problem in probably every hamlet in this country."

According to Madison, blacks shouldn't rest easy, especially with no precautions having been taken to deal with the festering white mob enraged by the verdict. "Why aren't we concerned about some yahoo in Gaithersburg [a D.C. suburb] who might run down an elderly black gentleman?" he wondered. "Maybe they won't do anything afterwards, but who knows? It may not be a riot. It may not be in the form of the Aryan Nation. But it might be some young white suburbanite . . . that might say, 'Any black person walks down this street, we'll get him.'"

The nationally syndicated Julianne Malveaux of Pacifica Radio also had a few things on her mind. Here's Malveaux bemoaning Simpson lawyer Robert Shapiro's decision to take issue with Holocaust comparisons from his dream teammate Johnnie Cochran: "I don't want to have a pity party and say my suffering was worse than yours, but if 'Holocaust' is a metaphor for suffering, it certainly applies to African-American people. And excuse me, Mr. Shapiro, but Mark Fuhrman, meet James Crow II, also known as Jim, also known quite frankly as Adolf."

What?

But back to the merits of the Simpson case: "Jews were not the only Europeans who participated in the slave trade, but they were some of them. We don't need to focus on them, we need to focus on the slave trade."

Though Cochran now seems eager to mute any race schisms, his supporters in the air wars see no reason to shrink. "When people don't like the way the conversation is going, they're accused of playing the race card," said Malveaux. "I *am* the race card. When I sit down at the table you cannot extract the melanin from me through some superscientific process. Now am I the Queen of Spades, or the 2? That perhaps is the question."

To flesh out these themes, Malveaux assembled some of the sharpest legal minds in the country. Trial attorney Leonard Birdsong said, "Black people don't usually get the benefit of the doubt. . . . Juries very often do the right things for the wrong reasons."

"You mean the *white* things for the wrong reasons?" asked Malveaux.

"Yeah, that could be it," Birdsong concurred.

Malveaux continued to beat up the prosecutors for all their ancillary arguments concerning Simpson's spousal abuse ("the statistics don't bear them out, that all batterers are murderers") and refocused the case on the primary issue—African-Americans getting the shaft.

Lessons were learned, career advice distributed. Angela Jordan Davis of the National Rainbow Coalition: "Even O.J. Simpson with all his wealth and all his celebrity—he may have succeeded here—but even he was not immune from racism in this case." Malveaux suggested Simpson could make restitution for unseemly nonhomicidal behavior by "taking a leadership position in talking about domestic violence" (an idea expressed, as well, by Jesse Jackson in the *Washington Post*).

Countless hours of trial-watching have given birth to Malveaux's latest judicial epiphany. Disallowing that naggish pittance, burden of proof, she stated, "Prosecution gets the last word. The deck is stacked always in favor of the prosecution."

But Birdsong's faith was rekindled: "That's why we have the jury system. People from the community

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were supposed to come together, use their collective good sense, put that together with the law, and make a decision about the people who lived among them. That's why you get a jury of your peers." (Note to panel: The jurors live nowhere near O.J.'s Brentwood manse.)

The beauty of black talk radio, its performers often say, is that information is not tightly controlled as it is in white media. Truth is not diluted, debate can be fostered. Not that Malveaux actually had any debate, but she wondered aloud what it might be like by asking one panelist, "We ended up with three African-Americans in this conversation. How would it have differed if we brought in a white person who truly believed Simpson was guilty and was angry about the verdict?"

But give her some diversity points. Right after the panel, she interviewed Russell Means, famed Native-American activist and co-star of *The Last of the Mohicans*, who chastised those "Vichy Indian leaders talking about treaty rights." (Vichy Indians? This stumped even Dr. Malveaux with her MIT Ph.D: "This is a tribe I'm not hip to.")

They soon found common ground, however, as Means promoted his new CD, "The Radical," with cuts like "Waco: The White Man's Wounded Knee" and "Nixon's Dead Ass," along with his new book, *Where White Men Fear to Tread*.

The white man "is afraid of matriarchal society—he wants total control," Means said with anthropological verve. "The only thing he has a relationship with is his dog."

"That's real sad," Malveaux agreed.

Not as sad as Washington media mogul Cathy Hughes's performance on WOL radio, or the "We Offer Love" network, as she calls it. After pleading with "dear mother-father God" to "help us live past this point of emotional turmoil," Hughes made her case for the jury's evidence-based decision. "If they had been voting on emotion, they would have convicted him just on the fact that nobody is more hostile to interracial relationships than black women. Let me tell you how sisters feel. There's hurt behind the issue of a rich, good-looking brother leaving a good hard-working sister who stuck with him through his hard years for a white teenage blonde. There's decades of hurt bedded down in those sisters, and they were able to rise above it."

Her audience agreed. Said one caller: "You name me one case when African-Americans sliced up their victims to that extent. Black people don't do stuff like that from what I've read and heard. We'll shoot you and cut you, maybe once or twice, but not like that."

A listener named Dee said of the black-and-blue Nicole: "Just because they have those pictures, that's not to say that O.J. was the one who beat her like that. . . . Anybody could've kicked her around. It doesn't mean he was going to kill her just because he was jealous. . . . She might have been spending all his money."

I was at the Nubian Eye clothing shop, right next to the Nation of Islam's D.C. headquarters, when the verdict was announced. After enduring an unrelated press conference address by Malik Zulu Shabazz about the impending judgment by the righteous, or some apocalyptic equivalent, no one was more relieved than I to hear "not guilty"—at least until I got to my car. But as I made the acquaintance of five kindly gents who let me crowd around their six-inch screen, we had a post-verdict symposium about time-lines and DNA and other things we knew absolutely nothing about.

We jawed back and forth about who was full of what, about motive and hair fibers, and about how Ronald Goldman, dead at 25, was only at Nicole's house because he "was trying to make a booty call." One of my newfound friends even confessed, "The information that I got from the TV, I'm gonna be honest, I think the police killed her."

But when the verdict was actually rendered, the youngest, most guarded, and avid defender of Simpson dropped to his knees and shrieked in a falsetto that would have done Eddie Kendricks proud: "He got away with it." ♦

THE GENDER CARD LOSES

by Gertrude Himmelfarb

Race trumped gender"—for me this comment, by a professor of government quoted in the *Washington Post*, is the most telling observation on the Simpson verdict.

For years I have been complaining of the "race/class/gender" trinity that dominates academia, while my friends have been assuring me that this is a distinctly academic deformation, yet another example of the insularity and parochial nature of the university today. The Simpson trial, I am afraid, confirms the trickle-down theory: Sooner or later (sooner more often than later), the university's obsessions filter down throughout the educational system, the media, and society at large.

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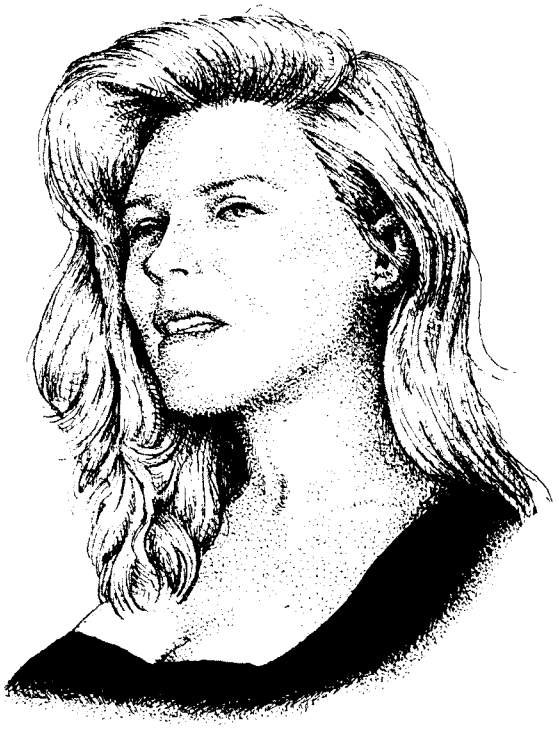
In fact, the race/class/gender mantra is not quite accurate. "Class" should be in third place; in its present location it is a courtesy to dispossessed Marxists. Race and gender vie for primacy. These are not only crucial factors in the admission of students and appointment of professors; they are, more significantly, the determining factors in the curriculum itself. No discipline is thought to be adequately presented, no subject adequately studied, unless it focuses on one or all of these components. They are presumed to be the defining attributes of all people, all knowledge, all reality.

With the Simpson trial, we can longer ignore the extent to which race and gender have infiltrated into the public consciousness and, more fatally, into the legal process. After decades of the most strenuous efforts to overcome racial and sexual stereotypes, to judge people as individuals rather than as members of groups, we have regressed to the concept of group identity. And precisely those who have most to lose by it have embraced it most enthusiastically.



The overwhelming support of Simpson by blacks throughout the trial and their jubilation at its outcome have nothing to do with the individual defendant and the murder of two other individuals, and everything to do with the fact of race. Those on both sides of the racial divide must now confront the true dimensions of racism in this country—a racism revealed as much in the final appeal of the defense attorney as in the abhorrent prejudices of one of the prosecution witnesses.

In itself, this is no great surprise. We have seen it in previous trials, in poll data, and in innumerable public demonstrations. What is perhaps unique in the Simpson case is the stark competition between two rival group identities.

In the university, gender usually trumps race, if only because women are so much more plentiful and feminists so much more powerful. Every subject, including the sciences, has by now been "engendered"; there is no comparable term for black or ethnic studies.

Outside the university, however, race is more often the trump card. For feminists, spoiled by their success in shaping the public perception (or at least the media perception) of the Clarence Thomas hearings, this case is a resounding defeat. The Thomas hearings were not a fair test; with the black woman testifying against a black man, it was easy for white feminists to support the black woman as the victim of putative sexual harassment.

In the Simpson case the victims are a white woman and a white man, and the charge was nothing less than murder. That charge, moreover, was backed up by the undisputed fact of prior abuse by the husband, a textbook example of battered-wife syndrome. Directors of domestic violence shelters are reported as "devastated" by the outcome; one calls it a "major setback" for the cause of battered women. They also have good reason to be devastated by the fact that many of the black women in their shelters actually supported Simpson.

It is also a major setback, although feminists will find it hard to admit this, for the group thinking, the "engendered" thinking, that they have done so much to promote. If they have succeeded in collectivizing and homogenizing women, in representing women generically and congenitally as the victims of an oppressive patriarchy, they must face up to the fact that other groups will do the same. If they play the game of "sexual politics" (the title of an early feminist manifesto), they must be prepared for blacks to play the race card. And if not blacks, then any other group that finds it convenient to present itself as a victimized class.

It was an enormous achievement of civilization to transcend group identities and locate human dignity and responsibility in the individual. The regression to a race/class/gender mentality is yet further evidence of the de-moralization that afflicts our society—the de-moralization that occurs when individuals are deprived of their moral character, their responsibility as individual moral agents.

Gertrude Himmelfarb is the author, most recently, of *The De-Moralization of Society* ***(Alfred A. Knopf).***

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NEWTON, CLEAVER, SIMPSON

by Peter Collier and David Horowitz

When it was revealed that Lionel Cryer, the black juror who flashed O.J. a black power salute right after the verdict, was a onetime member of the Black Panther Party, the Simpson trial found its context. That black fist called up the ghostly voice of sixties criminal-hero Eldridge Cleaver, who taunted the white world in *Soul on Ice*: "I'm perfectly aware that I'm in prison, that I'm a Negro, that I've been a rapist. . . . My answer to all such thoughts lurking in their split-level heads, crouching behind their squinting bombardier eyes, is that the blood of Vietnamese peasants has paid off all my debts." It is not hard to imagine O.J., his consciousness now raised by his new political advisors, thinking, if not saying, that Mark Fuhrman has paid off all his.

In the complex background of the Simpson trial lies Cleaver's hallucinatory voice and the gestural politics it was part of, and another trial which took place nearly 30 years ago that troubled the American judicial system even more profoundly—and permanently—than O.J.'s did. The defendant was Cleaver's co-conspirator Huey Newton, charged with murdering a white policeman in Oakland. There was no question that Newton was present at the scene, or that he had threatened to kill a policeman in the past. There was a compelling timeline, a wealth of physical and forensics evidence, and even a black eyewitness to the crime. But the issue as framed by Newton's attorney Charles Garry was not whether Newton did it, but whether the System had conspired to put yet another proud black male in jeopardy. In putting the System on trial, instead of the defendant, Garry joined up with the zeitgeist and invented the wheel which would be rolled adroitly by a generation of legal demagogues from William Kunstler to Leonard Wineglass. In fact, Garry's innovation, and the radical racial themes he imported into the criminal justice system, were an inheritance that ultimately passed also to Johnnie Cochran.

A young attorney with wide-lapel, lime-green suits and a topiary-like Afro, Johnnie Cochran was a political fixer and aspiring member of the Tom Bradley machine in Los Angeles during the seventies. Then he was changed forever—by his own testimony—after taking on the case of Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, a Vietnam vet who returned home with a knowledge of munitions and explosives and became the head of the Black Panther Party's underground "army."

In a case that would have almost eerie resonances with the Simpson affair 26 years later, Pratt murdered a white couple in 1968 on a Los Angeles tennis court. Cochran entered the case and offered a defense based on the assertion that his client had been set up by FBI agents who had maliciously corrupted evidence and suborned witnesses. The theory did not play as well as it would a generation later, when racial paranoia was more widespread and Cochran had a more mediagenic client and a more vulnerable enemy in the LAPD. But the experience stayed with him. Cochran says he told O.J. about Geronimo Pratt shortly after coming on the defense team and pledged, "I will not let this happen to you."

Cochran could say this with some confidence because his own "life experience" (a term he told Oprah he preferred to "race") told him how deeply the radical thinking of the sixties had penetrated southern California's black community, where racism—as his own meteoric career attests—is less onerous than at any time in American history, but is nonetheless invoked with an almost addictive fervor to explain any adverse circumstance or behavior of blacks. A beneficiary of the changes of the past 30 years, Cochran saw how these changes could be used in the O.J. defense in a way that was not possible when he took the case of Geronimo Pratt.

Huey Newton had always insisted on white attorneys and juries because he knew that whites would be impressed by his self-constructed political myth as an outlaw rebel, a man in "primitive revolt" against social oppression exemplified by the guardians of that injustice, the racist police. Newton feared a jury of black peers because he knew they would recognize him for the street hustler he was. Johnnie Cochran did not want O.J. to have a jury of his peers—Brentwood millionaires—because he wanted to create a myth for his client as a crossover artist who had tried to play in the white world but ultimately failed, for all his charisma, because when push came to shove, race trumped even the power that comes from wealth and celebrity. A jury of color would buy this myth because of the polarization and radicalization that had overtaken the black community in the last 30 years and destroyed its center of gravity by convincing it that racism was worse than ever.

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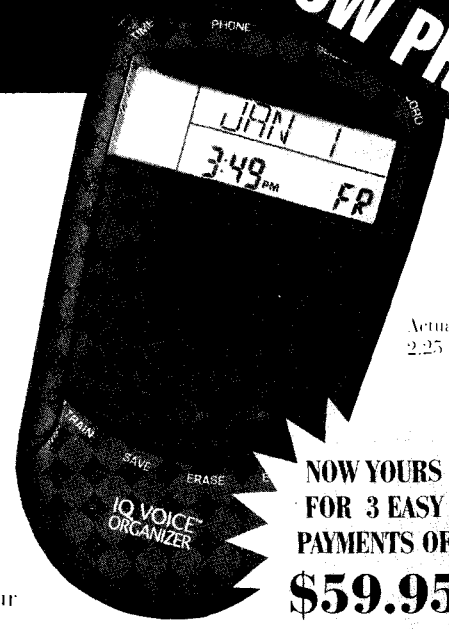

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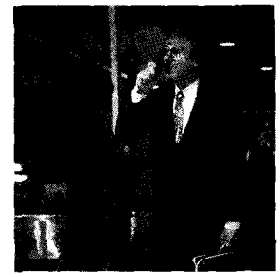

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The System had been put on trial continually since 1967, most recently in the riot following the Rodney King verdict, and Cochran saw it could be put on trial again in what, on the surface, was a less promising case even than Geronimo Pratt's. "Send a message," he urged the jury in his summation—not "seek the truth" or "make justice prevail"—but do the right thing and "send a message" to the System and to the LAPD, which is the System's most visible symbol. In Lionel Cryer's black power salute was exactly the message Cochran wanted to send to the white world: It's payback time. That the message hit home could be seen in the reaction of Benny Davis, a black store owner in L.A.: "Yeah, he did it. About time a brother got away with something around here."

It is true, as Robert Shapiro has said, that the race card was dealt from the bottom of the deck during the proceedings that freed his client. Yet it is also clear that the race card was played long before the trial began and Mark Fuhrman was brought to the stand. From the outset, white officials in the L.A. County DA's office behaved like the character in *The Manchurian Candidate* who enters a state of mesmerized suggestibility when shown a playing card.

It was the threat of black riots like those that followed the Simi Valley trial of the policemen who beat Rodney King that caused District Attorney Gil Garcetti to file the case downtown—a world apart from Brentwood and O.J.'s life. This fateful decision, which determined the outcome of the case, was followed by Garcetti's capitulation to a pretrial delegation of black leaders (including Johnnie Cochran), who demanded that the death penalty, itself a presumed symbol of institutional racism, not be invoked.

The race card was played again inside the D.A.'s office when the prosecution impanelled a jury with members (like Lionel Cryer) who had been revealed during voir dire to be clearly sympathetic to Simpson, although 10 of its peremptory challenges were left unused. It is not hard to imagine what race cards were played a year later when 11 jurors of color confronted a 61-year-old white woman who was a potential holdout. The woman's daughter said afterwards that her mother tearfully told her she thought O.J. was guilty, "but Fuhrman!"

Fuhrman was like Voltaire's God: If he didn't exist, Johnnie Cochran would have had to invent him. It is true that Fuhrman is a despicable racist with violent intentions—but no more violent than those expressed by O.J. in his repeated assaults against Nicole. The infamous tapes show how Fuhrman would deal with gangsters, crackheads, and low lifes in South Central. They show nothing about how he would deal with a well-connected black millionaire sports legend in Brentwood. And, in fact, when Fuhrman showed up at the Rockingham estate during one of O.J.'s rampages against Nicole, he cut Simpson slack instead of taking him in, as was his duty. Ironically, the only proven victim of Fuhrman's less than admirable behavior as a cop, so far, is Nicole Brown Simpson.

Fuhrman's treatment of O.J. was repeated by the red carpet initially rolled out for him after the murders by the LAPD itself. The police failed to make him an immediate suspect and left him free and unwatched—after notifying him of his arrest!—so that he could attempt an escape. Fuhrman might indeed burn all blacks if given half a chance. But the idea that he and his star-struck pals could have conceived an on-the-spot conspiracy to frame Simpson—a plot then ratified by the highest levels of the LAPD in the few minutes allotted—is about as credible as the notion that AIDS is a Jewish doctors' plot against black Americans, that the government intentionally funnels crack into the ghetto, or any of the other lurid theories that spread like Ebola in the radicalized black subculture.

The Simpson trial has been treated as a great celebrity case in the tradition of the trials of Dr. Sam Shepard or Bruno Hauptmann, who kidnapped the Lindbergh baby. But it was actually a political trial whose antecedents are Charles Garry's defense of Huey Newton and William Kunstler's defense of Larry Davis, the drug king who shot nine policemen attempting to arrest him but was acquitted because Kunstler convinced the jury that the police had been out to "get" yet another black man who was only acting in "self-defense."

The jury closest in spirit to the one in the O.J. case was the jury that decided the fate of Lemrick Nelson, who murdered a Hasidic Jew in Crown Heights four years ago. Yankel Rosenbaum was run down by a crowd of blacks chanting "Kill the Jew!" The killer was caught with the murder weapon and the blood of Rosenbaum on his person; he was identified by the dying man and confessed to his captors in jail. But taking the Garry-Kunstler-Cochran line of defense, his lawyers argued that Lemrick Nelson was the victim of a police conspiracy and frame-up. A jury of nine blacks and three Puerto Ricans acquitted him. Afterwards, the jurors gave a party for the murderer to celebrate his release, in their version of Lionel Cryer's black power salute.

For the past nine months, black leaders in Los Angeles and around the country kept saying that O.J. couldn't get a fair trial. The tragedy of the outcome is that they were right.

Peter Collier and David Horowitz are authors of** Destructive Generation **and other works. They currently work with the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, in Los Angeles.

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THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE

by William Kristol

Where is the outrage? It's there, all right. Most Americans were disgusted and appalled and angered by the O.J. verdict. But moral outrage at the sight of a murderer walking free is apparently not a respectable sentiment in polite society. At least not on the opinion pages of America's leading newspapers the day after the verdict, where almost nothing approaching an expression of outrage was to be found.

The *New York Times* editorialist, for one, chose to focus almost exclusively on the "bungling" and "flaws" of the Los Angeles Police Department, and noted the trial's deficiencies as well; all of this "left a stigma on criminal justice which could take years to repair." The *Times*'s only acknowledgment that something more might have happened, that we might have witnessed an elemental and grotesque injustice, was a passing reference to "a tragedy of errors." But of course what happened was no tragedy, in which justice was helpless. What happened was a disgrace. Justice was denied.

The *Washington Post*, meanwhile, judiciously and even-handedly ruminated on the case's "baggage"—baggage that made it "probably inevitable that millions of observers would have been disappointed no matter how the case came out." But the Americans I've talked to—the Americans the *Post* worries might be so unsophisticated as to question all "the protections afforded defendants in American courts"—these American aren't "disappointed." They're indignant. Nor do they share *USA Today*'s view that "too many compelling subplots remain incomplete." For them, the verdict was all too complete in its denial of justice to the Brown and Goldman families, and in its mockery of all who teach their children that murder is wrong, and that crime doesn't pay.

Even conservative editorialists seemed to think it would be inappropriate to say what everyone in fact felt. The *Wall Street Journal* thought "we would be fools not to see that the Simpson jury is trying to tell this country something important." Oh really? The *Journal* doesn't usually spend a lot of time speculating on what "important message" federal regulators or Congressional tax-hikers are trying to send.

Have the enlightened elements of American society become incapable of speaking simple truths or expressing straight-forward moral judgments? Most Americans aren't. Of course they know that occasionally a murderer will go free in an imperfect judicial system. They know that it's hard to prevent the trial of a celebrity from becoming a spectacle sickeningly inappropriate to the gravity of the crime. They know there is a gulf between the races. They even know that most editorial pages are congenitally timid. But I'm not sure any of us knew until last week just how vast is the gulf between enlightened opinion and Americans' common sense and common moral feeling. With a few honorable exceptions—the column by *Washington Post* sports columnist Michael Wilbon the day after the verdict comes to mind—ordinary Americans found little voice given to their most deeply felt and deeply held moral judgments.

This is not a healthy thing. Moral outrage can turn into indiscriminate rage if it is denied appropriate expression and, ultimately, effect. If the moral indignation at injustice that necessarily accompanies an attachment to justice is mocked and frustrated, the attachment to justice wanes—or the pursuit of justice takes an illiberal and dangerous path. Madison understood this: "Justice is the end of government. It is the end of civil society. It ever has been and ever will be pursued until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit." Today's Madisonian Republican revolution in Washington is, I think, altogether for the good. But unless it can engender or invite a broader intellectual, moral, and social reformation, it will be in vain.

Meanwhile, a murderer parties in L.A., and chats with Larry King on CNN. ♦

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Britain

Less Loony

by Irwin Stelzer

Brighton, England

TRULY DISORIENTING—a British political party is proposing what the *Sunday Times* calls a "Contract with Britain," and the party's name is not Conservative but Labour. That was the most striking aspect of last week's gathering of Labour party activists for their annual conference here in seaside Brighton, a resort town that had its first flirtation with fashion 200 years ago when the then-Prince of Wales took up residence with his new bride.

His Regency Palace, with its Indian-style exterior and ornate Sino-Egyptian decoration, still attracts flocks of visitors—almost as many as crowded around the stalls set up by Labour party activists in the lobby of the modernish Brighton Convention Center. All the usual suspects were represented: among others, Amnesty International, Action for Southern Africa, and Compassion in World Farming, which is committed to amending the Treaty of Rome to reclassify animals from "agricultural goods" to "sentient beings."

The disjunction between Brighton-as-royal-playground and Brighton-as-host-to-Labour is matched, indeed trumped, by the disjunction between the gritty old Labour party of the country's trade unions and 1990s party leader Tony Blair's "New Labour for a New Britain." Picture this. Educated in posh public schools (private schools, to non-Brits) and at Oxford, Blair strides to center stage, well-coiffed and elegantly shod, flashing a smile that would have done Dwight Eisenhower proud. He has just come from a successful battle to delete from his party's constitution its notorious Clause 4, in which it had long promised a government takeover of the means of production and distribution. And from another battle that reduced the voting power of the unions in the Labour party. And still another that forced the local party unit from Leeds North East to kick a candidate off the ballot because her views were too left-wing

True. Blair doesn't call his list of promises, which he guarantees will be enacted within the lifespan of the next parliament, a "Contract with Britain." He refers to it instead as "a bargain between us and the people"—avoiding Newt Gingrich's word, one conference delegate told me, only because "the Americans have already done it." No squeezing the rich until "the pips squeak," as previous Labour governments had done. Lower taxes for "ordinary hard-working families." Reexamination of the welfare state, with cash penalties for those who refuse to participate in an expanded job-training program. Greater parental control of schools. A crackdown on what one Blair lieutenant calls "winos and beggars." Devolution of power from the central government in Whitehall to regional and local government. "Thousands of extra police officers on the beat." Every child to have "access to a proper laptop computer."

Reinventing British Labour? Well, almost. For, mingled with Blair's modern-sounding references to "a new age," "the new economy of the future," "a new technological economic challenge," is a bit of old-time socialist religion. And I do mean religion. But not one that refers directly to God, unmentioned by this church-going high Anglican aspirant to his nation's highest elective office. "Although our party is more Methodist than Marxist," one MP told me, "it's bad form for a British politician to use God in a political speech." Instead, Blair quotes Scripture without attribution—"I *am* my brother's keeper"—and speaks of "A belief in society....[We] are of the same family, community." This, and not nationalization or economics, he says, "is my socialism."

So too is his disinclination to rely on market forces to produce the information superhighway modern Britain needs. That, says Blair in a sentence that could have been spoken by Al Gore in a moment of unguarded candor, "requires a supreme national effort. The market won't do it." Nor will it produce "a proper national integrated transport system. We should sit down as a country and plan it. Not wait for the free market to build it."

This is not quite socialist enough for many party activists. Perhaps the most revealing feature of this conference was the chatter in the corridors and bars. While speaker after speaker droned on in support of Blair's "new Labour," activist after activist grumbled that the party had lost its way, abandoning socialism in favor of me-too Thatcherism. These activists are too hungry for power, after 16 years out of office, to shatter the unity they know they must maintain if they are to win the next general election. Margaret Beckett, a left-wing member of Blair's shadow cabinet, repeatedly responded to my questions about policy with, "We want to get elected. To get power we must first be elected. And that requires unity." So the left waits. And contents itself with three important victories.

First, it has partially tempered Blair's general reformist homilies with specific platform planks that stake out old-left positions. Blair may have eliminated Clause 4's general call for government ownership, but his party is pledged to reverse the planned privatization of the railroads and to prevent the privatization of the post office.

Blair may have toned down the rhetoric of class

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warfare, but Labour is pledged to eliminate the stock options of the "fat cats" and "robber barons" who manage the nation's privatized utilities. Labour may now be opposed to what the shadow chancellor Gordon Brown called in his address to the conference "inflationary booms," but old party warhorse Roy Hattersley promises that the return of Labour to power will mark the resurrection of Keynesian demand-boosting economic policies.

A second victory for the left has been its ability to get Blair to leave the party considerable room to swing in its direction after the election. Blair, of course, denies this. A few months ago, he asked me, "What did Bill Clinton do wrong?" and professed himself eager to avoid the president's mistake of running in the center but then governing from the left. But his party's activists have plans of their own, and, given the structure of British government, they might just prevail.

The many left-wingers who will be in Blair's cabinet—including his top deputy, John Prescott—will have considerable power to use the loopholes their leader has left them. Blair speaks of Labour's desire "to increase economically and socially productive spending," a description broad enough to accommodate any new social program. He calls for "fair" taxes, a phrase that brings smiles to the faces of the redistributionists in his party. He is infatuated with "communitarianism," which his activists are willing to accept as a new label on their old bottle of red wine.

A third left-wing triumph was to get Blair, who once advocated withdrawal from the European Community, to sign on to the European Union's social program, which would impose costly labor standards on British employers. This makes it possible for Labour to introduce socialist policies to Britain through the back door of Brussels.

Make no mistake: Blair is no Bolshie-in-waiting. He knows that the global economy reduces any government's control of its fiscal and monetary policies. He knows that a healthy private sector is necessary to the fulfillment of his dreams for a prosperous Britain. And he knows that he must keep his left in check if he is to govern Britain into the next century.

With Labour leading Tories by 25 points in the polls, it seems a sure bet that Mrs. Blair will be changing the drapes in 10 Downing Street after the next general election. Tory Prime Minister John Major can't seem to persuade the electorate that his government has a plausible program for the future, and Tony Blair has not put a foot wrong. Indeed, he has done almost everything right.

He has shed the party of Clause 4 and complete domination by Luddite trade unions. He has refused to sign on to the high-tax, high-spend policies that in the past frightened the middle and skilled working classes into the Tories' arms. He has sent his son to a school run by parents rather than by unions and educrats, to howls of anguish from his party's left and applause from parents who see a man committed to his children, rather than an outworn ideology. He has remodeled a party that once appeared to be on the verge of world-historic extinction and made it electable. Not a bad thing; like all democracies, Britain needs more than one functioning political party.

Irwin Stelzer is director of regulatory policy at the American Enterprise Institute.

The Senate

Robb to the Rescue

by Matthew Rees

"THE DIE HAS BEEN CAST," Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole said in July after Republicans failed to halt a filibuster against regulatory reform, once a wildly popular item on Congress's agenda. The issue was dead, the victim of extraordinarily intense lobbying by the White House and ideological opposition by Senate Democrats. President Clinton's aides had expended more energy on regulatory reform than on any issue but the dreaded balanced-budget amendment. And though Republicans had gotten 58 votes (60 are required) for cloture, there weren't enough wavering Democrats to warrant another effort to break the filibuster.

Now that's changed. Thanks to a Democratic senator, Charles Robb of Virginia, regulatory reform is likely to pass this year. After the July vote, Robb urged Dole to keep trying, but Dole had other, more promising issues to pursue. Robb didn't give up. He began searching for Democrats to switch with him and back regulatory reform. Robb has found one potential ally, Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia, and may have others on the way. If he does, Dole will quickly bring the bill to the floor and force Democrats to vote against regulatory reform—or vote with Robb and Republicans and incur the wrath of the White House and Democratic leadership.

Robb's challenge to his own party is dangerous. Opposition to regulatory reform by Senate liberals is passionate, as is conservative support. Conservatives are willing to accept a less-than-ideal bill in the Senate, figuring it will be strengthened in a conference with the House. The result, says Republican Senator

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Paul Coverdell of Georgia, will be to "put power in the hands of working people, not in the hands of Washington bureaucrats." Washington lobbyist David Rivkin says regulatory reform would require government officials to consider costs and benefits seriously before issuing new regulations, and enable citizens to challenge onerous federal rules more easily.

For the White House, this presents a big political problem: If a regulatory reform bill lands on the president's desk, Clinton is stuck. Signing it would enrage the Democratic party's influential environmental wing, while a veto would undermine the administration's boasts about deregulation and reinventing government. Thus, the obvious solution is to prevent the bill from getting out of the Senate.

With Robb's defection, that's increasingly difficult. To smooth his path, Robb has been granted small technical changes in the GOP bill. He rebuffed White House efforts to satisfy him with an executive order on regulatory reform, telling Clinton aides in late September that he was pressing ahead with Republicans. Dole has acknowledged Robb's pivotal role. In a September 21 speech to the National Association of Manufacturers, he said: "A lot of people were ready to give last rites to regulatory reform weeks and weeks ago. I'm not one of them. . . . Neither is Senator Chuck Robb." Of course, Dole had all but given last rites earlier.

Why is Robb doing this? First, he supports the bill's general principles. "I think we can find smarter and more efficient ways to regulate, with the same effect on safety," he told me. Robb's interest in the issue dates back to his days as governor, when he sponsored a review of state regulations, and underscores his conservative credentials (he'd surely have been a Republican if he hadn't married President Johnson's daughter Lynda). Second, Robb wants to re-establish his reputation as a leader of moderate Democrats. He lost this reputation in a first term marked by feuds with Governor Doug Wilder and sordid tales of relations with beauty queen Tai Collins. Bucking the White House and Democratic leaders would help to restore it.

Republicans never expected regulatory reform would be so difficult. The House version passed easily, and the Senate bill, drafted primarily by Dole counsel Kyle McSlarrow, was supposed to be a done deal after a compromise was hammered out in June with Democratic Senator J. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana. Johnston pledged to bring 10 Democrats with him, but they never materialized. Stiff opposition from interest groups, invoking the specter of an E. coli epidemic, did. The president followed, saying on July 15 that if the Republican bill passed, there would be "more tragedies like what happened to Eric Mueller," the California boy who died after eating a tainted hamburger.

Needing 60 votes, Dole was forced in July to make further changes to satisfy Republican John Chafee. Dole had also been promised support by Robb and Pat Moynihan, which meant there were enough votes to close debate and bring the bill up for a vote. But shortly before the July 20 vote, Robb called Republican Orrin Hatch to say he had changed his mind (Moynihan followed soon thereafter). Why? Robb didn't say, but Vice President Gore had contacted both and then showed up in the Capitol on the day of the vote to keep the troops in line. Also, Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle had assured Robb and others that Dole would compromise if Democrats held out. Dole topped out at 58 votes, two short of the number he needed to close debate.

Despite the defeat, Dole refused to compromise further. The surprise is that Robb has come around. Dole campaigned last fall for Republican Ollie North in his Senate race against Robb. He also gave North a $5,000 contribution. But Dole refrained from negative comments about Robb and justified his support for North as a way for Republicans to gain control of the Senate. "I get along fine with Chuck Robb," Dole says. Now more than ever. ♦

China

A Cool Hot Spot

by William McGurn

Quemoy, Taiwan

In a cramped workshop just a few miles off the coast of China, Wu Zen-tung takes an old bomb fragment and within minutes has hammered it into a sleek kitchen knife. The bomb dates from 1958, when Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces managed to hold onto Quemoy, the little Taiwanese outpost that would become an issue in the 1960 presidential election. The Nationalists prevailed despite a merciless, 44-day artillery barrage from the mainland that looked like it might prove the trigger for World War III. Chinese Communist forces dropped some 474,910 bombs over those 44 days, and they would continue to shell Quemoy every other day for the next 20 years, right up until the U.S. recognized Beijing on New Year's Day 1979. That's a lot of steel, and in good entrepreneurial style Wu used it to found the Jin Her Lin Steel Knife Co., famous throughout Taiwan for its quality.

With China now conducting missile tests off the

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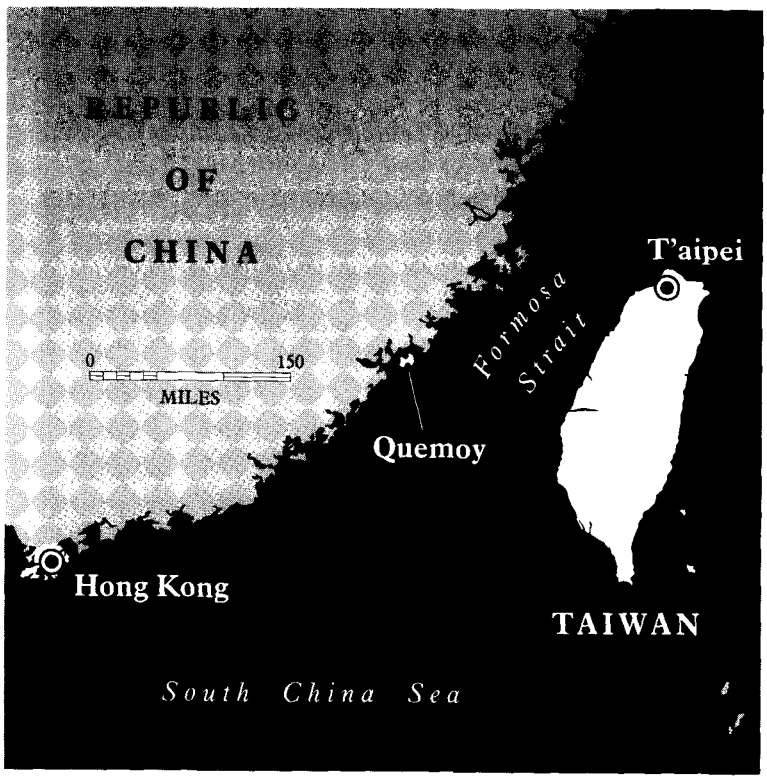
north coast of Taiwan proper, you might think Quemoy's residents are having nightmares about a rerun. Yet despite a military buildup that has covered the island with concrete bunkers and fortified gun emplacements—even the main mountain has been hollowed out for defense—this has to be the most laid-back flashpoint on earth. Market stalls are full of goods smuggled in from the mainland, including the ubiquitous red-colored packs of Special cigarettes ("Made in the Xiamen Cigarette Factory"). When I ask Wu and his customers if they worry about China, I am met with laughter all around. "The next time China tries, they would send guided missiles, not steel bombs," says Wu. "And I don't think we will be the target."

The lack of anxiety in Quemoy illustrates the dramatic shift in Taiwan's strengths and vulnerabilities. In the bad old days, with Chiang and Mao duking it out for control, the defense of Quemoy became a focal point of the "who's tougher on Communism" debates of the Nixon-Kennedy presidential race. But today, Taiwan's extraordinary financial success has led to an anxiety shift. Those who have looked out at Chinese guns for decades are calm. Yet those in the capital city of Taipei, some 250 miles across the Taiwan Strait, are in a panic—maybe because they have so much more to lose. In the month after Beijing's July 18 announcement of missile tests, the Taipei stock market dropped 17 percent, and it could easily seesaw up and down should China decide on another show of strength.



All this stands in dramatic contrast to just a few months ago, when not even the massacre of 24 Taiwanese tourists by a renegade People's Liberation Army outfit stopped the growing business ties between island and mainland (approved Taiwanese investment in China for the first seven months of 1995 is up 44 percent over last year). So what's got China's back up? The pundits trace it to Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui's visit to Cornell University earlier this year to attend his class reunion.

But it's not so much the visit itself as the context, which Beijing sees as a concerted effort between the U.S. and Taiwan to split China—an impression only encouraged by Newt Gingrich's call for the U.S. "to get it over with" and recognize Taiwan, and by Warren Christopher's assurances to Beijing only a week before the Lee visit that it would not happen. Beijing, moreover, does not distinguish between President Lee, who is pushing for the international community's de facto recognition of Taiwan's unique circumstances, and the opposition Democratic Progressive party, which wants a formal divorce from China and the declaration of a new and independent nation. The *South China Morning Post* quoted Chinese President Jiang Zemin telling his military chiefs that "the Taiwan independence movement is getting out of hand and we cannot let this go on."

Within Taiwan's government, China's anxieties are attributed to a failure to understand the give and take of political expression in a newly open Taiwan. In a recent private meeting with a visiting American supporter, Lee confided that he did not understand China's pique. "I'm not the president of Taiwan," he said. "I'm the president of the Republic of China. So what's the problem?"

The problem, of course, is that China doesn't believe him. From Beijing's view, Lee's push for Taiwan's reentry into the United Nations (Taiwan was kicked out when the People's Republic was let in back in the 1970s), his visit to Cornell, and a visit to Europe by Prime Minister Lien Chan is the thin edge of the wedge for Taiwanese independence.

Many of the old guard in the KMT feel the same way. Lee, after all, is a native Taiwanese, not a mainlander as all the island's leaders have been since Chiang arrived here in 1949. Lee's connections to China, like those of most Taiwanese, are tenuous at best. And Lee did not help his case much with a May 1994 interview with a Japanese paper where he spoke effusively about Japan (where he was edu-

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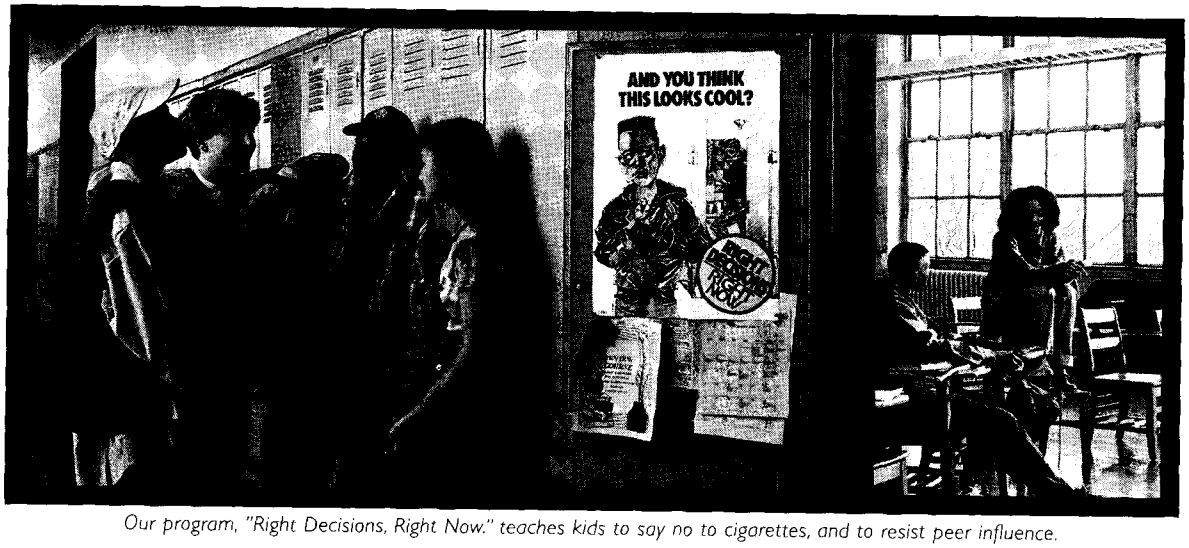

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*Retailer Education Study, Denver, CO, 1994. Dr. P. John Lymberopoulos, University of Colorado at Boulder.

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cated) and with great ambivalence about China.

What do Taiwan's people want? Well, that's the kind of theoretical question that only leads in circles. A far better question is what kind of arrangement they'd settle for. Clearly the business community, which has $15 to $20 billion invested in China, would like Lee to tone things down and get back to business as usual. Yet even business leaders would like Taiwan to have a little more breathing room, not to be forever shut out of such places as the U.N., the World Trade Organization and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, not to be treated as second-class citizens every time they go abroad and produce a passport recognized by only a handful of nations. "Taiwanese feel their inferior status every day in business when they go through customs or immigration," says Maysing Yang of the Democratic Progressive party, the chief opposition party.

The DPP solution is straightforward: independence. Miss Yang cites polls showing that public resistance to China's bullying is stiffening, and that more than two-thirds say they have not been intimidated by the Chinese missile tests. All this is just the kind of thing that sets China's nerves on edge, but a senior government official emphasizes that it must be put in perspective. "Just because they [the DPP] are louder doesn't mean they are more popular," he says of the pro-independence push. And indeed where in the past these sentiments would (and did) land DPP members in jail, today they are a campaign issue. And while nobody in Taipei really expects China to invade because of it—among other things, it's not clear China would prevail—everyone knows that it is well within China's power to continue to destabilize Taiwan and undermine its market.

The irony, however, is that Lee is probably the best thing that China could have asked for in Taiwan, for he has managed to diffuse pro-independence sentiment by accommodating popular pressures for greater international recognition without surrendering the Communist-KMT orthodoxy that there is but one China, and that eventually Taipei and Beijing will be re-united. Should China continue its attacks, says Andrew Yang of the Taipei-based Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies, the result will likely be a polarization of Taiwanese politics as both the KMT and DPP split into embittered factions, not exactly the best prescription for stable relations at a moment when China is itself rent by crisis over succession. "Time is on our side," he says, "but we need to let the pot cool down. Now is not the time to push China's bottom line."

William McGurn is senior editor of the *Far Eastern Economic Review.*

HEY, THIS PRO-CHOICE WE LIKE: It's hard to think of a place that needs school reform more than Washington, D.C.—or a place that seems less likely to get it. Washington's school system, you'll remember, is the one that doesn't seem to know how many students it actually has, the system in which a quarter of school security guards recently were found to have criminal records. To say nothing of the education offered, or lack of it.

Enter Steve Gunderson, a Republican in his last term representing Wisconsin in the House. Gunderson intends, presently, to attach an amendment to the District's congressional appropriation that would give students a chance to opt out of public education. Using a block of federal money, Gunderson's plan would award scholarships to poor kids, allowing them to go to private schools. At the same time, the plan would force public schools to get their act together by making the city government tie funding to enrollment.

Should the plan become law, suits are bound to be filed against it, and are likely to proceed quickly to the Supreme Court. Which is a good thing. Since the District has no state constitution, such a case will decide only one question: Does using public funds to send kids to private and religious schools violate the First Amendment? It would be a perfect—and needed—test case on school choice.

♦

HERE SHE IS, MAH MOMMA: President Clinton has announced this year's winners of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and (as is true of all administrations) the list is a distillation of the social and cultural attitudes of the White House. This year's honorees include Earth Day creator Gaylord Nelson, liberal historian John Hope Franklin, and (posthumously) union leader Walter Reuther. But who will win the Medal in the next administration? A list of predictions for each of the presidential contenders:

- **Colin Powell:** *Bob Woodward.*
- **Robert Dole:** *Greg Schnacke*, his legislative director, with a big thanks to all the guys down at the mark-up session of the Conference committee.
- **Phil Gramm:** *Dickey Flatt*; honorable mention to *Mah Momma* (as all Americans will refer to Mrs. Gramm once her son is chief executive).
- **Pat Buchanan:** *Generalissimo Francisco Franco* (posthumous); *Westbrook Pegler* (posthumous); *Father Charles Coughlin* (posthumous); *Pope Leo XIII* (posthumous).

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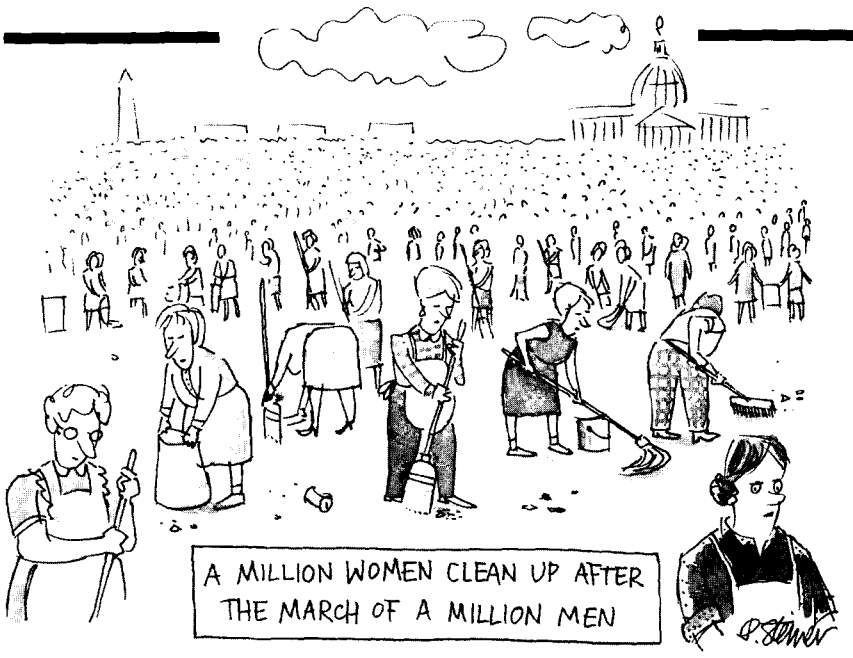
Scrapbook



THE STANDARD QUESTION: Remember that question pollster Frank Luntz asked a few months ago about President Clinton—the one that asked, "Would you want your son or daughter to grow up and be like him?" Seventy-two percent said no. Well, we asked Luntz to broaden the question: If you had your choice, would you rather your child grow up and be like Bill Clinton, Newt Gingrich, Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Hillary Clinton, or Bob Dole? The winner, in Luntz's national survey the last week of September, was Powell at 26 percent. The other preferences were Hillary (10 percent), Gore and Dole (both 8), Clinton (7), Gingrich (6), and don't know (36). Sorry, Newt; maybe they read Connie Bruck's hatchet job on you in last week's *New Yorker*—an article remarkable in the annals of political journalism for its astounding, breathtaking illiteracy about the workings of Washington and Congress.

♦

CORRECTION: Due to an error by the printer, two lines were dropped from last week's memoir, "My Friend, Allan Bloom," by Werner J. Dannhauser. The paragraph at the end of page 45 should have read as follows:

"Rousseau also served Allan as a safeguard against an overalliance with conservatism. (Allan had many right-wing views but was not really a conservative and refused to call himself one.) In conservative circles, which run their own risk of becoming politically correct in their own fashion, it is often customary to pit Rousseau against Burke to the detriment of the former. Allan was by no means blind to the merits of Burke, and even appreciated the latter's characterization of Rousseau as the 'insane Socrates of the French National Assembly,' but Burke tends to stand for prudence, and prudence is a close relative of moderation, and neither his close friends nor bitter enemies would ever call Allan Bloom moderate."

The article's concluding paragraph on page 47 should have read as follows:

"Shoshana once told me she was reminded of Allan when she read, in Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, the line that against a genius we have but one defense, to love him. She loved him, and so did many of us, and it wasn't just defensive, though he was a genius."

- **Lamar Alexander:** *Mary Anne and Robby Jones* of Tupegula, Tenn. (just regular folks who know what to do, unlike those folks up in Washington. Cut their pay and send them home! Come on along!).
- **H. Ross Perot:** *H. Ross Perot.*
- **Arlen Specter:** *Margaret Sanger* (posthumous).
- **Alan Keyes**: *Harry V. Jaffa*; *Abraham Lincoln* (posthumous).
- **Richard Lugar**: *Lee Hamilton*, *Cyrus Vance*, *Warren Christopher* (posthumous—oops, sorry, living).
- **Steve Forbes**: *Jude Wanniski*, *Michael Milken*, *Jay Gould* (posthumous).

♦

THE READING LIST: Here's a short primer for a certain acquitted celebrity on what to expect when judgment is finally passed upon him:

The Inferno, by Dante. In which, guided by the poet Virgil, our hero sees those who murdered their loved ones forever tormented for their crimes.

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, by Jonathan Edwards. The greatest of Puritan sermons, the one that gave birth to the very notion of Everlasting Hellfire.

The Third Policeman, by Flann O'Brien. A work by Ireland's funniest writer, during the course of which you realize that the narrator is writing from Hell.

No Exit, by Jean-Paul Sartre. In which Hell is other people, and we don't mean A.C. Cowlings and Kato Kaelin (though for us, that would be Hell enough).

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The Global Brain Trust: A Vivisection

By Andrew Ferguson

Since the end of the Cold War . . . Is any opening sentence dreaded more by readers of newspapers, magazines, and journals of opinion? *After the fall of the Berlin Wall.* . . . Synapses freeze, eyes glaze, brain cells die one by one. *Where do we find ourselves six years after the breakup of the Soviet empire?*

Well, here is where some of us find ourselves, this Wednesday evening in late September: in the Grand Ballroom of San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel, at the kick-off dinner of the State of the World Forum. It is a distinguished company, including retired diplomats (George Shultz and Zbigniew Brzezinski), Nobel laureates (Guatemala's Rigoberto Menchu and the Bell Labs physicist Arno Penzias), science popularizers (Carl Sagan and Fritzjof Capra), movie stars (Jane Fonda and Shirley MacLaine), rich guys (Ted Turner and David Packard), New Age gurus (Sam Keen and Deepak Chopra), and many more—500 in all, leading lights from business, politics, religion, and the arts. Such an extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge and spiritual insight, has not been seen in a single room since Bill Moyers dined alone.

And at the dais, making welcoming remarks through an interpreter, is Mikhail Gorbachev. With his Forum co-chairman, James Garrison, Gorbachev has hand-picked the invitees, most of whom have paid $5,000 to attend. It is now almost 11 p.m. Dinner has been served, the plates cleared away, and little candles cast sleepy pools of light across the crystal, showing the lipstick smudges and fingerprints made greasy from the beef medallions in shashlik marinade.

Gorbachev has been talking for 25 minutes, in low tones followed by the high-pitched, stuttering translation of his interpreter. He is still pointing out people in the audience. Here's his good friend George Mitchell, and over there is his even better friend Alan Cranston. Five more minutes pass. In the dark the seated figures begin to fidget. And here is Thabo Mbeki, deputy president of South Africa, another good friend. Jane Fonda, head lowered, squats out of her seat, does a duck walk to the exit. At length Gorbachev seems to be winding down. The audience leans forward, poised for an ovation and hasty retreat. Gorbachev takes a breath. "And now," he says, "my colleagues have suggested I give a broad overview of our current world situation."

And over the vast ballroom the realization presses down like a damp blanket: *He's just getting started.*

Yet no one dares follow Fonda to the exit. For another half hour or longer he goes on, displaying a public-speaking technique refined over years of addressing iron-butted apparatchiks in endless Central Committee meetings. Bromide falls upon bromide. "There are profound layers among the interfaces of politics, geopolitics, and philosophy," he says. Will he list them all? In the general catalepsy no one stirs.

And one can't help but wonder, there in the dark: Why not? What mysterious centrifugal force, beyond politeness, keeps the forum-goers in their seats? What impels Gorbachev to drone on, and his listeners to listen, here in a grand hotel, six years after the breakup of the Soviet empire?

Over the next four days Mikhail Gorbachev, along with Sam Keen and Ted Turner and Deepak Chopra and the rest, make the answer plain: They are busy creating a New Civilization—for all of us. And a little boredom is a small price to pay.

"This is the first step in establishing a global brain trust," Gorbachev said that night, and the New Civilization is its top priority. This was merely the *first* State of the World Forum. The brain trust plans to meet at least once a year through 2000, with Gorbachev as convener. In the four years since he felt the boot of the Russian people, he has gathered the experience necessary to serve as the brain trust's nucleus. He travels the world these days as an international sage, attending forums on the 21st Century, the Future of Democracy, Democracy in the 21st Century, the Democracy of the Future, the Future of the 21st Century, and other stately themes. A global infrastructure

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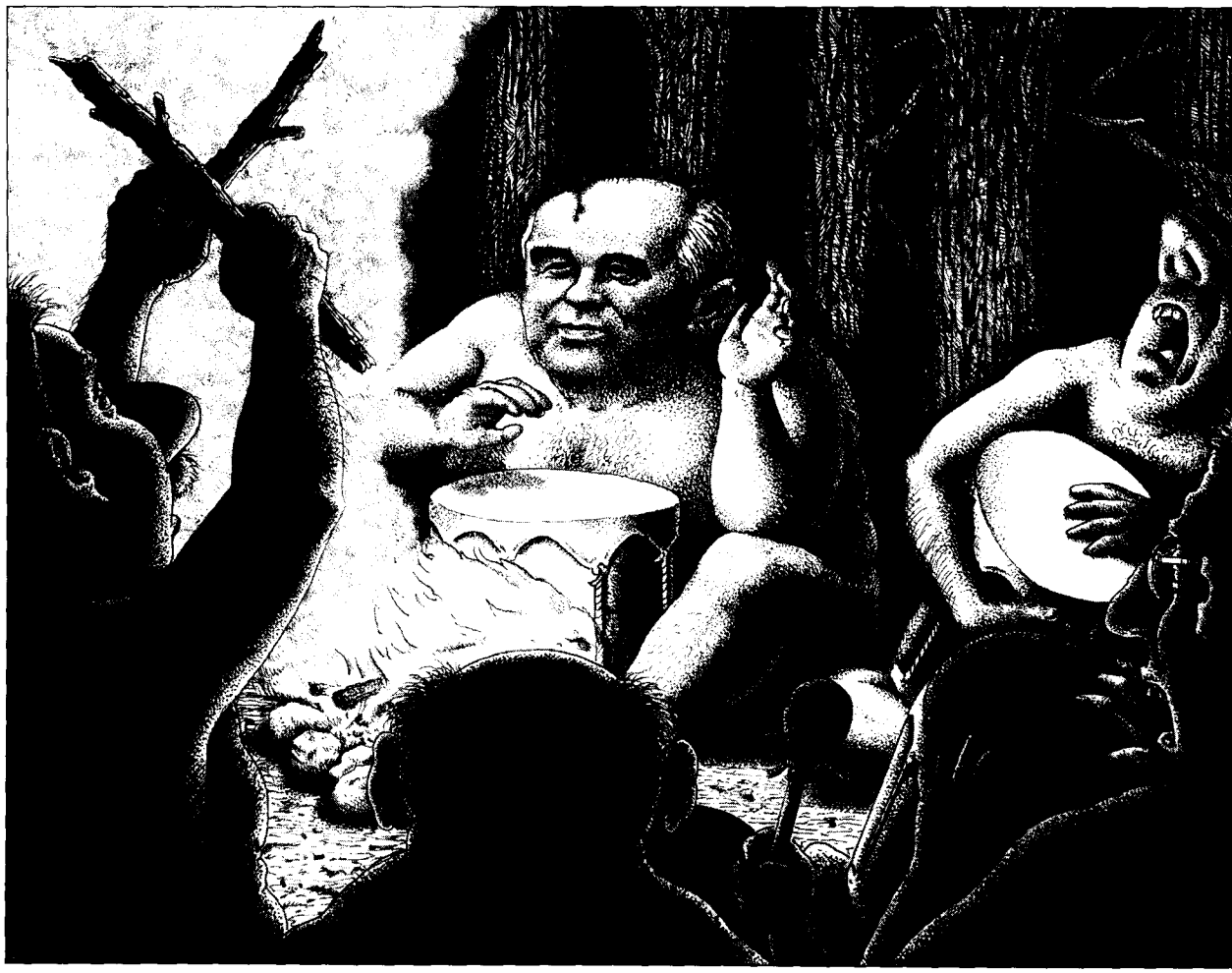
of foundations, philanthropists, corporate interests, and academic institutions sustains him and picks up the tab.

It is a good life, as he says himself: "I have many things to keep me busy." One of those is the Gorbachev Foundation, which he co-founded with Garrison in San Francisco and Moscow and which sponsored the State of the World Forum. Another is the International Green Cross, of which he is president. Having led the most environmentally profligate empire in history, Gorby in retirement has gone green. Apocalyptic environmentalism is the creed that undergirds the global brain trust. "A new civilization would mean, above all, solving the problems that exist between man and the rest of nature," he told *Audubon* magazine last year. "If these problems are not solved, the rest is nonsense."

For Gorbachev and his fellow brain trusters, environmentalism satisfies several needs at once. It is quasi-religious, allowing for talk of values and "the spiritual." "A revolution has to take place in people's minds," he likes to say. For its adherents and even its distant sympathizers, the implosion of communism left a void; ecological alarmism fills it, for like communism it is a unified field theory of social organization. And just as important, environmentalism encourages Gorbachev and his colleagues to sustain the moral equivalence that was their chief rhetorical safeguard during the Cold War. The "global ecological crisis" proves that capitalism as well as communism has failed.

"Now that we are rid of this syndrome of imposing the communist model on people," he told *Audubon*, "I have to tell you Americans that you've been pushing your American way of life for decades. There has to be a different approach. Americans have to be more modest in their desires."

Perhaps most important of all, environmentalism allows Gorbachev to speak in just such big, blowy tropes. He has mastered the alarmist platitude. He is a global Polonius. "There is a sweeping crisis that threatens our civilization," Gorbachev told the Forum,



Sean Delonas

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more than once. "The most profound need is to move away from a technology-centered to a culture-centered way of living. We must change the nature of consumption so that it is geared toward our cultural needs. With the growing scarcity of resources, we must focus on the need to control the global process."

For years, commentators speculated on Gorbachev's intellectual development, as he worked his way through the classics of Western political thought: from Aristotle to the Declaration of Independence and the Federalist Papers, through Lincoln and even to Hayek. He has finally come to rest, on the *Whole Earth Catalog*.

Gorbachev's global brain trust relishes its variety, drawn as it is, self-consciously, from the fields of business and religion, science and politics. Participants were brought to the Fairmont for a series of plenary sessions and roundtable discussions. The themes were Gorbachevian—New Indicators for Measuring Sustainable Development; Facing the Planet's Carrying Capacity; Ecology: The New Science of the Sacred; and many others. As these grand themes were chewed over, the variety of the participants' backgrounds was meant to result in unexpected synergies of insight.

On close inspection, however, the variety of the brain trust looks less various. David Packard and Ted Turner notwithstanding, the businessfolk tend to airy job descriptions—"specialists in international empowerment strategies" and "consultants" in such corporate shakedown rackets as "environmental performance" and "disability compliance." The politicians are all out of work: Brian Mulroney, Jim Sasser, Gorbachev himself. Most of the scientists labor in "New Science"; Rupert Sheldrake, for example, though once a biochemist at Cambridge, has spent the last several years working on a "morphic field theory of the mind," which aims to prove that the "sun is thinking." "Religious leaders" are almost exclusively Buddhist, Vedantist, or Shirley MacLaine. The rest of the participants were drawn from what they call "civic society," a euphemism for non-profits. Peggy Dulany, to cite one case, is spending her legacy as a Rockefeller scion on squatter camps in Latin America. Michael Murphy, the founder of the Esalen Institute, has been investigating the mystical experiences of golfers.

Among those in the brain trust, however, there is still room for paradox, if not friction. Early Thursday morning, at the start of the first plenary session, I sat in the press pen, listening to keynoter Thabo Mbeki, the former South African ANC activist and now Nelson Mandela's number-two. He deplored, gently, the sparse African presence at the Forum, insinuating that there might be a First World bias at work. At that moment, Ted Turner plopped down next to me, seeming agitated. Turner tore open his copy of the day's *New York Times* and turned at once to the Business page. A banner headline read: "Turner Pay Deal Said to Top $100 million."

"Will the poor of the world be able to participate in our agenda?" Mbeki asked from the podium.

Turner read with furrowed brow, his finger tracing down the page: "As the new vice chairman of Time Warner, Mr. Turner is to receive a five-year compensation package worth well in excess of $100 million."

"Will they have a say in the growing gap of wealth in the world?" Mbeki wondered.

Turner kept reading: "Add that to the $75 million in salary, bonus and long-term compensation..."

"Will they continue to be left behind in the communications revolution?" Mbeki said. His voice rose, but Ted didn't appear to be listening.

The nettlesome contrast recurred. The corn-producer Archer Daniels Midland underwrote the Forum for $250,000. No company is so intent that the Third World achieve "sustainable development." And not a penny more than *sustainable*—surely not to the point where those countries start exporting corn.

ADM is a conservative entity that feints left; among the brain trust, the process more often runs in the other direction. Garrison, Gorbachev's co-chair and the man who brought the brain trust into being, declined to be interviewed at the Forum. But a recent profile in *SF Weekly* revealed his career to be a kind of synecdoche for the American left and its evolution over the last 20 years. In miniature, it is the story of the brain trust itself.

Garrison is a slight man; short as Gorbachev and half as heavy. His tailored suits hang straight down from his shoulders. Though 44, he looks a few months shy of getting his driver's license. He has the quiet air of a divinity student, which he once was. He studied at Harvard, then at Cambridge, where he earned a Ph.D. under the radical theologian J.A.T. Robinson. In the mid-70s he became active in the anti-nuclear movement, chaining himself to bulldozers outside Midwestern power plants. He later fused his spiritual interests with his activism by helping to found the Christic Institute. The Institute gained notoriety as the chief publicist for the "Secret Team" conspiracy theory, which characterized the Cold War as a fraud imposed upon a peace-loving planet by a shadowy team of American intelligence officers.

Slowly, as the Left eroded under the Reagan terror,

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Garrison felt the tug of commerce. Throughout the 80s, as a freelance peacenik, he traveled often to the Soviet Union and established contacts within the Politburo. His Rolodex swelled. "I could leverage my contacts to meet a Kissinger or a George Shultz," he told *SF Weekly*. "I became important because I could deliver important Soviets." When communism collapsed, he parlayed his network of friendships into investment opportunities.

He organized U.S. speaking tours for Gorbachev, Eduard Shevardnadze, and Boris Yeltsin. His investment-consulting firm, based in San Francisco, flourished with deals in the former Soviet bloc. In the mainstream at last, he even ran for Congress, and is now said to be eyeing a Senate race. Today he is a very wealthy man, perhaps the only operator in the world who's on a first-name basis with both George Shultz and New Age healer Deepak Chopra—an embodiment of the New New Left.

He is also enormously competent, a virtue seldom associated with people who chain themselves to bulldozers. The Forum was a massive logistical enterprise, and it operated with the elegant precision of a Swiss railroad. Staffers with walkie-talkies and earpieces quietly guided participants from event to event. Sessions never ran overtime, unless Gorbachev wanted to say something. Meals were prepared by celebrity chefs, including Wolfgang Puck, and diners were serenaded by New Age musicians gently playing their dulcimers and tablas and bells.

For the American Left, the introduction of New Age spirituality is the most significant development since the trial of the Scottsboro Boys—or at least since the divorce of Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden. (It is always "spirituality," by the way, never "religion"; and never, God forbid, "God.") A Vietnamese monk was on hand to instruct participants in meditation techniques. Drawing on his huge bestseller, *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, Deepak Chopra spoke of the seven levels of consciousness in one room, while New Economists outlined the Love Economy in the room next door. Gorbachev himself spoke freely of "transforming human consciousness." In the press room, reporters from *Earth Times* and *Disarmament News* did yogic stretching exercises, emitting little moans. A makeshift bookstore sold CDs like "Sacred Healing

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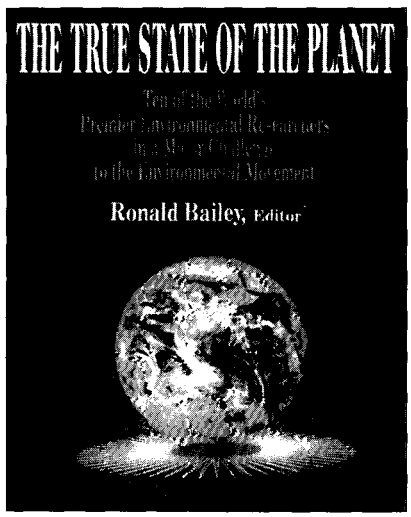

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Chants of Tibet" and "Exploring the Cosmic Christ" and books like *Jesus, CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership*.

Aside from Garrison himself, no one understands this final, decadent phase of the Left better than Danny Sheehan, a well-known political activist who, like Garrison, was one of the founders of the Christic Institute. On the last day of the Forum, I buttonholed him outside the Grand Ballroom.

"A couple of things can come from this Forum," he said, in his breathless manner. "Like I was in the bathroom just now. And I saw Ruud Lubbers [the former prime minister of the Netherlands]. I was on a panel with him—and just now I called him 'Ruud.'" He calls Gorbachev "Michael." First names. So there's a friendship thing happening. The statespersons get to be friends with the New Scientists who get to be friends with the spiritual leaders who get to be friends with the statespersons. This is potentially paradigm-impacting.

"Since the end of the Cold War, we have a brief window here where we can undo all the old paradigms. You know there's the old Newtonian, Cartesian paradigm—units of matter colliding in space like Ping-Pong balls. All our present institutions are based on that rationalist model. But we've known since Heisenberg and the 'uncertainty principle' that this paradigm isn't true. It's not accurate. There are no ultimate integers of matter, just networks of potentialities. Everything is ultimately related to everything else. No absolutes.

"So what we're saying is: We must build our public policy-making institutions on this new view of what reality is."

I said, "Wow. Is Gorbachev on board with this?"

"I've spent enough time with him to know that he has a genuine insight into the spiritual dimension. He's not comfortable talking about it. But he's very into it."

All of which could sound sort of scary, until you actually watch our new global brain trust in action, or non-action. Its main product is talk—working papers and action plans, emphasis on the *papers* and *plans*. Still, the great unanswered question of the Forum was the practical one: How to impose this new view of reality, how to create a New Civilization?

I left Sheehan and walked into the final plenary session. The next morning Gorbachev would host his friends George Bush and Margaret Thatcher, neither of whom attended the Forum proper, for an hour-long roundtable broadcast by CNN. But this plenary on Saturday afternoon was to be the official summing-up.

The ballroom was packed. Each roundtable discussion group had a leader, and one by one they made their way to the dais to present their findings to Gorbachev and the assembled brain trust.

Alan Cranston, once a U.S. senator from California, went first. Over the previous four days he had led a group in discussing "The New Architecture of Global Security." Under the pitiless stage lights he looked like a woodcut by Edvard Munch.

His roundtable had produced eminently practical suggestions, he said. A ban on nuclear testing. Enlargement of the U.N. Security Council. And allowing people to vote for their country's U.N. representative. He finished to polite applause.

Then came Sam Keen, the men's movement maven who was discovered by Bill Moyers. His roundtable had discussed "The Global Crisis of the Spirit." The solutions to the crisis: "A re-enchantment of the world." "Stopping the colonization of the spirit by commercial interests." And one other idea: "If we cut the world's population by 90 percent, there won't be enough people left to do ecological damage." The ovation shook the chandeliers.

And so it went. At last Stephen Rhinesmith—identified as a "specialist on global business strategy implementation"—rose to close the session. "For four days," he said, "we have lived together, talked together, hoped together."

In the ballroom, several brain trusters held hands. There was silence. Rhinesmith offered "four action steps—things we can all do as we move from this place." They were: 1) Think of what it all means to you. 2) Think about what we can do as a community. 3) Think about what "we can do as representatives of the people we represent." And 4) Think of what we can do as participants in the global community.

None of these, of course, is really "a thing to do," and from this fact the rest of us can take comfort. *Imagine the problems the global brain trust would* present for the world if it had stormed from the Fairmont agitating to nationalize the banks or institute mandatory bedtime.

That, or something similar, would have been the agenda a mere decade ago, before the fall of the Wall, when the Left was in full flower. But for now the braintrusters seem content merely to interface among themselves.

After the thunderous applause for Rhinesmith, people got up to go. Gorbachev, godfather of the New Civilization, seized the microphone. "I have a two-minute comment," he said. I left the ballroom 20 minutes later. He was still talking. ♦

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Even Start: A Lousy Program Everyone Loves

By Tucker Carlson

This summer, the House of Representatives moved to cut or eliminate some 130 education programs. Some, however, were so sacrosanct that even the energized Republican budget-slashers let them be. The Even Start Family Literacy Program, beloved by politicians in both parties, survived the brutal Appropriations Committee process without a scratch and is slated to get $102 million next year—almost seven times what it received when first funded six years ago.

An astonishingly diverse array of political figures has fought to preserve Even Start, a program that tries to teach reading to poor children and their parents at the same time. Old-line liberals such as Sen. Paul Simon are fans; so too are right-wing fire-breathers like Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham. Barbara Bush touted the program, as did her husband, who cited Even Start in speeches as an example of government at its best. And the Even Start fan club has grown under the Clinton administration. Secretary of Education Richard Riley has described it as "one of the bright spots" in the Clinton education plan. His deputy secretary, Madeleine Kunin, seconded her boss with statistics. "According to a recent evaluation," she explained to a reporter, children in Even Start "have doubled their learning capacity."

No one has cheered more loudly for Even Start than Republican Rep. William Goodling, the chairman of the Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee and a former school administrator, who helped create the program in 1988. When the Clinton administration suggested turning the program's funds over to the states in a block grant earlier this year, Goodling led the effort to stop the plan. Even Start, Goodling pointed out, doesn't simply help children to read; it helps parents as well, who in turn can help their children. And, as the congressman reminded his audience, "parents are the best teachers."

True, true. But what sort of teacher is Even Start?

Thanks to an extensive study of the program published earlier this year, it is now possible to answer that question in some detail. Social scientists from an independent research firm, Abt Associates of Boston, spent four years evaluating the nearly 500 individual Even Start sites across the country. The evaluation, financed by federal dollars, was a model of sound research techniques, with carefully matched control groups, and sophisticated analysis of immense amounts of data. As the first major study of a "family literacy" program, the evaluation drew intense interest from educators. Fans of Even Start appeared particularly enthusiastic about it, certain the results would prove the program's worthiness.

They didn't.

At first, results seemed promising: Abt's researchers discovered that Even Start kids had made substantial gains over a year and a half. Unfortunately, they weren't the only ones: Kids in the control group, who had never seen the inside of an Even Start classroom, made almost exactly the same gains. In other words, children who spent their time in Even Start would have learned just as much had they enrolled in a regular preschool, or stayed home and watched *Sesame Street*.

Researchers got roughly the same results from every literacy test they administered. One particularly revealing experiment concerned vocabulary, perhaps the key measure of any literacy program. The researchers analyzed the results of a common word test given to Even Start children when they joined the program, and again when they left. The same tests were given to a control group over the same period of time. When the scores were compared, it turned out that children who had eluded Even Start learned more vocabulary words—and learned them more quickly—than those who had enrolled in it.

For supporters of Even Start, data like these seemed perverse, like the scene in Woody Allen's *Sleeper* when a present-day man wakes up 200 years from now and discovers that smoking, fatty foods, and sugar improve health and longevity. Congressman Goodling simply refused to believe the news. "I didn't see that part of the study," he admits, but "I would say that that [the mediocre test scores] would be impossi-

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ble." The reason? "If you visit the Even Start programs, they are constantly concentrating on reading-readiness skills."

In other words: Looks good, must work.

Stunned educrats—those who had made it all the way through the evaluation—did their best to respond to the evidence, playing up the scraps of good news contained in Abt's report. In a memo sent to Even Start administrators, for instance, Department of Education officials boasted that "Even Start helped many adults attain a GED." While technically true—*the study found Even Start parents more likely than* their control-group peers to get high-school equivalency certificates—it was hardly something to brag about. Even the Labor Department has declared equivalency diplomas almost useless for anything but wall decorations. "The GED," concluded a report issued earlier this year by Robert Reich, "appears to have more of a credentialing than a training effect." Its recipients, the report said, "appear to fare only slightly better in the labor market than seemingly comparable high school dropouts."

Sharon Darling, head of the National Center for Family Literacy and one of the architects of Even Start, admits the Abt evaluation hasn't shed much favorable light on the program she helped design. "It did not do a good job of portraying the success of Even Start," she says. But anyway, says Darling, Even Start would work well if only it were more "comprehensive." That is, if only it had more money.

Darling's explanation is an old favorite in Washington, where government programs are never failures, just not "fully funded." In the case of Even Start, however, the rejoinder sounds especially tinny. Over its first three years, the federal government spent an average of $4,022 a year for each family enrolled in Even Start. Not much compared to some government expenditures, but not bad for a literacy program that doesn't make people literate. If the funding outlined in the House this summer becomes law, Even Start will get more federal dollars next year than public libraries, arguably the best literacy program of all.

What is all that money buying, if not literacy? Nothing less than the best job-training program ever devised, says Rebecca Roberts, director of an Even Start project in Washington, D.C. According to Roberts, it doesn't much matter whether or not the program actually teaches anyone to read. Economic success is what counts: "Finding employment and housing—we really push that a lot," she says. And apparently with great results. "Studies have shown," Roberts explains, that most of the unemployed adults enrolled in Even Start find jobs when they complete the program. "People get employed," she declares confidently. "That's the bottom line."

Actually, it's not. Isolated Even Start projects may lift large numbers of their graduates from the unemployment rolls, but most don't even come close. According to the Abt evaluation, enrolling in Even Start makes it considerably *less* likely that a parent will find work later. Only 14 percent of the unemployed adults studied had found a job by the end of their affiliation with Even Start, compared with 22 percent of the control group. Another study found that Even Start had a negative effect on household income.

So much for economic empowerment.

Which is not to say Even Start doesn't accomplish anything. Families enrolled in the program do a number of fun things. Listen to some of the program descriptions sent in to evaluators by staff at Even Start projects around the country:

In Indianapolis, "one group activity to emphasize group connectiveness and foster parents' self-esteem has parents and staff stand in a large circle and toss a ball of twine across the circle, making a large 'spider's web.' Before someone throws the ball, she has to announce to whom she is throwing it and then say something nice about that person."

In Phoenix, "parenting workshops" have "included self-esteem, stress management, child abuse, domestic violence, parent-child communication, spouse abuse, how to take a local bus, and making children's toys."

In Birmingham, Ala., "one trip was to the city jail, at parents' request, to view the facility and visit Death Row." Administrators there "feel that the program builds esteem in adults. Staff also report that parents are cleaner and better-groomed, that parent-child communication has improved, and that parents are more positive with their children."

In Hackensack, N.J., the Even Start staff took children and their parents to the circus and the Statue of Liberty.

In Reading, Pa., hungry students took a field trip to "Pizza Hut, where they made their own pizzas"—presumably as a exercise in literacy awareness. ("*A* is for anchovy.")

Back in Washington, Rebecca Roberts boasts about the extracurriculars her Even Start project offers, from classes in arts and crafts, to advice on "talking to your kids about sex." Parents and children "do get some literacy skills, but they really get self-confidence."

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William Bramhall

Self-esteem. Self-confidence. Stress management. Notice a theme here? Having failed to teach people to read, Even Start has broadened its aims. The new frontier in literacy education, it turns out, is telling parents how to raise their kids. "Parenting is the only thing we do in life that we're never trained for," explained an Even Start instructor to the *New York Times*. "We go ahead, have children and hope that things work out."

The implication, of course, is that, without "training" from programs like Even Start, things don't work out, not for poor parents, at least. This is federal paternalism on an awe-inspiring scale, and it pervades Even Start.

Howard Miller, director of several Even Start projects in suburban Maryland, explains how a program designed to teach reading now concerns itself with the Whole Person: "We really address all aspects of parenting: health and nutrition, routines, organizing your home, immunization, safety. Especially nurturing, the relationships.

How do brothers and sisters solve problems, feeling loved, feeling confident, building responsibility in children? All of those are major issues."

Another "major issue" apparently now related to literacy is spanking. Lan Dao, an Even Start worker in the Mount Pleasant section of Washington, explains how, in addition to advising parents on what to feed their children, she tells them not to spank their kids. "I say, 'No, you can't hit them.'" Though he couches it in educanto, Howard Miller makes essentially the same demand of parents: "We're trying to find other ways of discipline other than spanking." And what, exactly, does a parent's choice of corporal punishment have to do with reading? "It bears on the child's emotional development," responds Miller.

Questionnaires given to parents by Even Start workers are even more intrusive. Ostensibly designed to determine how well parents are teaching their children at home, the forms include a number of questions like, "Who buys the groceries for the family?" and who makes "most of the decisions about how the family income is to be spent?" There are also at least three questions concerning—you guessed it—spanking.

Perhaps the best evidence that Even Start has completed the long journey from literacy program to support group comes from Phoenix. Even Start workers in that city, wrote the Abt evaluators, "report that many husbands are abusive, but that women are reluctant to get help. Since divorce is not acceptable in the Hispanic community, even a woman's family does not encourage her to leave her husband. The Even Start staff are frustrated by the problems that they see but cannot solve. However, they do try to address these issues in home visits and parenting workshops."

Keep in mind, Even Start is a *literacy* program. Or it was. How did this happen? And why does Congress keep paying for it? Robert St. Pierre, one of the researchers who worked on the Abt evaluation of the program, has a theory. "The idea [of Even Start] makes sense," he says, "so people think there should be a way to make it work. But I'm not sure we've found it yet."

Rep. Goodling has no such doubts. But then, his assessment is unhindered by anything so rigid as test results. "Enthusiasm, outlook on life, all of those things, they're hard to measure," he says. Does this mean Even Start will enjoy the continued support of the Republican Congress? You bet, says Chairman Goodling. "I asked for more money, in fact." ♦

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Is Castro Convertible? A Skeptic Says No

By Robert Kagan

American policy toward Fidel Castro's Cuba could well change dramatically during the next administration, no matter who wins in November 1996. Don't be misled by the lopsided vote in the House last month to tighten the economic embargo against Cuba. This week or next, the Senate version of that legislation may face stronger opposition. And even if it passes, the political victory will mask a deep vulnerability in the embargo policy that has governed American relations with Cuba for 35 years. Put simply, support for the embargo has lost intellectual respectability in Washington, and it may not be long before this defeat in the realm of ideas turns into a defeat in the realm of policy.

With the end of the Cold War, the strategic rationale for making economic war against Castro has lost its force—even among some conservatives. Within the past year, William F. Buckley, Jr., Richard Lugar, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, and a collection of former Reagan and Bush Latin Americanists have all called for lifting or easing the embargo, or at least beginning serious negotiations with Castro. Recent laws passed by the Cuban National Assembly to make foreign investment more inviting, if only slightly, have led many observers to conclude that Castro really wants to turn the Cuban economy in a free-market direction. And if *perestroika* does come to Cuba, the argument goes, then *glasnost* and political reform can't be far behind.

Complementing these theoretical speculations is a very untheoretical problem: the ever-present threat of another outpouring of Cuban refugees. In August 1994, Castro proved that he can make an American president's life miserable in vote-rich Florida whenever he decides an administration is not being creative enough in its policy toward Cuba, by sending 19,000 refugees to America on leaky boats. Though he is supposedly in a very weak position due to the demise of his Soviet patron, Castro has had great success frightening the world's most powerful nation into re-examining its policy. Call it immigration as a spur to imagination. Or call it simply "blackmail," which is the word used by Gillian Gunn, director of the Cuba Project at Georgetown University, who nevertheless favors paying at least part of Castro's ransom. At bottom, fear of refugees is what fuels the current drive for a "new consensus" on U.S. policy toward the Castro regime. As former assistant secretary of state Bernard Aronson complained during last year's refugee crisis, although the United States is "uniquely vulnerable" to events in Cuba, it has developed "no real policy to influence" those events.

In some parts of the Clinton administration, and increasingly in Republican foreign policy circles, the idea is taking hold that the United States can and should use economic and political engagement with Cuba as a means of hastening Castro's departure from power, shaping the pace and direction of reform, and easing the way for a peaceful transition to democracy. At its most sophisticated, the engagement strategy is a carefully choreographed minuet between the United States and the Castro regime. As laid out by Aronson, for instance, the plan would include "a step-by-step relaxation of the provisions of the embargo in exchange for concrete steps by the Cuban government to move irreversibly toward democracy." The United States might ease restrictions on travel or allow the delivery of more medicines and health services to Cuba, and in return Castro would release political prisoners. American businesses would be allowed to invest in Cuban enterprises in exchange for Castro's giving international human rights monitors freer rein. Gradually, the two countries would move in this synchronized fashion "up the ladder" to the highest rungs and the biggest rewards: Castro would agree to carry out constitutional reforms and, ultimately, hold internationally monitored elections in return for full normalization of relations with the United States. The Clinton administration's code phrase for this policy is "calibrated response," which Secretary of State Warren Christopher uttered once last year before being hushed by political commissars worried about the Cuban-American vote.

Would Castro really want to climb all the way up

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the ladder to the end of communism and his own rule in Cuba? The genius of the engagement strategy, its proponents argue, is that, in the end, Castro's intentions won't matter very much. Merely by taking the first few steps, by allowing some turn toward the free market, by easing political repression even a little, by letting American business, culture, and ideas into Cuba, Castro would unleash forces that must eventually escape his control. By "flooding Cuba with goods, people and information," the United States could overwhelm even Castro's carefully laid plans. Once having allowed an opening, Castro would not be able to close it. He would no longer have the convenient scapegoat of the American embargo on which to blame all his economic troubles. And if Castro refused to play his part in the American minuet, he would lose the sympathy of the world as well as his support in Cuba. Merely by offering a policy of engagement, Aronson argues, the United States could "shift the weight of international and internal pressure onto the Castro regime."

To skeptics who doubt the plausibility of a peaceful, American-brokered transition from communism to democracy in Cuba, the adherents of the "new consensus" point to the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, to the 1990 elections that ended Sandinista rule in Nicaragua, and, more intriguingly, to modernizing China. In each case, the argument runs, economic and political engagement, not isolation, helped bring the downfall of communism. Dwayne Andreas, the chairman of Archer Daniels Midland and a fervent opponent of the embargo against Cuba, believes American statesmen "have learned how to help reform communist countries." After all, "Nixon went to see Mao . . . and China immediately began to open up . . . [a] market economy and move toward democratic institutions." Nixon himself, in his last book, argued that the way to bring Castro down was "to build pressure from within by actively stimulating Cuba's contacts with the free world."

Faith in the power of the free market and the free exchange of ideas, faith in the inability of dictatorships to withstand the onslaught of liberal capitalism—these form the bedrock of the emerging "new consensus" about Cuba. In this sense, at least, the engagement strategy fits the spirit of the age. It has a flair, a daring, and an elegance to it, while the old policy suffers, in the *Wall Street Journal's* view, from a fatal "failure of imagination." And, best of all, the policy of "calibrated response" promises a satisfactory solution to the immigration problem, since Castro will presumably not punish a president who is dutifully climbing up his side of the ladder.

The only problem with this new approach, however, is that it rests on the assumption that Fidel Castro is an idiot.

For the past two years or more, Castro has been practically begging the United States to begin this policy of engagement and rapprochement, the purported aim of which is to sweep away everything he has spent the last four decades building. He has devoted himself single-mindedly to forcing the United States to lift the embargo, enticing American businessmen with promises of bounty, reaching out to more moderate Cuban-Americans to begin a dialogue and soften the opposition in the Cuban-American community, seeking every opportunity to prod American diplomats into discussions, and trying to open channels of communication even with conservative foreign policy experts in the Republican opposition. Doesn't Castro realize that he is walking into an American trap?

Castro, of course, is not an idiot. Indeed, by almost any measure he is one of the shrewdest and most resilient dictators of our time. He clearly believes that in the coming dangerous phase of engagement with the United States, he can get what he wants—the salvaging of his disastrous economy and an easing of the social pressures that have resulted—without undermining either his own rule or that of his chosen successors. When it comes to power in Cuba, Castro must believe he knows more about how to keep it than the Americans know about how to take it away.

Is he wrong? For all its elegance and creativity, at the heart of the proposed strategy of engagement with Cuba is an enormous conceit: that the United States can outmaneuver Castro in the struggle for Cuba's future and that it can do so even though Castro knows in advance precisely how we aim to go about undermining him. With due respect to American foreign policy virtuosity, this would seem to be a tall order.

Castro, it is safe to say, knows as much as Americans do about the downfall of communism and the end of the Cold War, and perhaps a good deal more. Well before American leaders appreciated the likely effects of Gorbachev's reforms, Castro knew, as former Soviet official Yuri Pavlov recalls, that "*perestroika* could get out of control and wreck the very system it was intended to improve . . . that *perestroika* was acting like the AIDS virus, destroying the immunological defense of the socialist political system." In an act of supreme courage and self-confidence, and with

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an iron determination to hold onto power at all costs, Castro in the late 1980s tacked in the opposite direction from his superpower patron. He ordered news of Gorbachev's reforms censored from Cuban newspapers and tried to immunize Cuba against the virus of *perestroika* by launching a "rectification of errors" campaign against would-be reformers. In the early 90s, as the Soviet empire crumbled, Castro's battle cry was "socialism or death!" Although dependent on the Soviet Union for everything from arms and defense to an economic subsidy amounting to several billion dollars a year, Castro stood fast against the global hurricane Gorbachev had unleashed.

Castro also witnessed firsthand what happened to those who took a different course at that critical moment. In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas followed Gorbachev's lead, succumbed to American pressure for reform, gave their opponents an opening, and promptly got themselves voted out of office. Those who today suggest that Castro can be lured into holding free elections in Cuba in the same way the Sandinistas were lured to their defeat in 1990 should recall Castro's advice at that time. "Elections are a risky business," Castro warned an over-confident Daniel Ortega in 1989. "If you get into the game, you should be prepared to lose." Castro did all he could to convince the Sandinistas to cancel the elections in 1990. "The people," he once noted sagely, "can make mistakes."

Castro, on the other hand, has made few mistakes. Those who suggest that the United States can ultimately split the Cuban military from Castro's control, for instance, ought to realize that Castro is well aware of the dangers and has been ruthlessly efficient in meeting them. Long before he faced a hint of trouble in his own military, he ordered the execution of Cuba's most highly decorated military hero, General Arnoldo Ochoa, merely because Ochoa was beginning to amass the kind of influence that could *someday* pose a challenge. Given the dismal state of American intelligence on the internal workings of the Cuban military, it is a safe bet that Castro will always be several steps ahead when it comes to securing the army's loyalty.

And what are the chances that Castro will lose control of whatever economic and political opening he permits in Cuba? The new investment law passed at the beginning of this month may have tantalized some potential investors, but it did nothing to limit state control over the economy. All foreign investment still has to be approved by the Cuban government, and Castro has made it clear that foreign investors will rarely be granted majority ownership of businesses in Cuba. Nothing could be clearer than Castro's intention to let in only those businesses willing to play by his rules.

Castro has been especially careful to prevent independent economic forces from emerging inside Cuba. Thus the new law invites investment from Cubans living abroad but denies the same right to those living in Cuba. The Cuban government also refused to grant foreign employers the right to hire and pay their employees directly, thus ensuring continued state control of workers, their earnings, and the flow of hard currency.

In supporting these reforms, Castro has declared that "nothing is going to get out of hand," and he has specifically pledged to avoid the catastrophe of *perestroika* that destroyed communism in the Soviet Union. A year ago he told interviewers from *U.S. News & World Report* that he had noted "with interest" the economic changes in China and Vietnam, but he insisted that similar reforms in Cuba must occur "without destabilizing the country and heading towards chaos." Some American analysts would have us believe that the wily Castro is merely trying to reassure hard-liners in his government who oppose economic reform. But everything in his long career as Cuba's dictator suggests that he means exactly what he says.

Is the United States clever enough, nimble enough, and resolute enough to beat Castro at his own game? One is inclined to skepticism. It is hardly reassuring to listen to American businessmen make their case. Andreas, for instance, seems to believe that "if you get rid of Castro, you'll get something worse," and he wishes Cuban-American activists would stop "trying to demonize Castro and everybody connected with him." When Andreas argues that the United States and its businessmen should be "in there helping [Castro] achieve these reforms," therefore, it doesn't sound like a clever ruse to up-end Castro. It sounds more like a businessman's desire to find a way to "do business."

That's the problem, of course, with trying to use American investment and trade in Cuba as leverage to force political reform. As in China, the question quickly becomes, who's leveraging whom? Even Congressman Joe Moakley, a liberal Democrat and a long-time crusader for human rights in Latin America, cannot help noting that lifting the embargo, in addition to being the "best way to push for democratic reforms" in Cuba, would also create opportunities for the Gillette Co. and Reebok International, two large employers in his district. If the United States eased

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Chip Bok

leaders to combine a growing economy with strong dictatorial rule. An increasing number of influential American policy-makers and experts seem to agree that this might be the best course for Cuba, though they dare not admit it, perhaps even to themselves. It is always interesting to theorize about outfoxing Castro, but it seems pretty clear that Castro has played his hand perfectly so far. With a little refugee crisis here and there, he has persuaded some important former enemies that it is in America's interest to help him get through these hard years. All he needs now is the right American president in 1997, one strong enough and secure enough to move to the next stage in the plan.

restrictions on U.S. investments in Cuba in exchange for, say, Castro's granting greater press freedoms, would we be willing to pay the price of nullifying those investments once he found it necessary to clamp down on the press? Our policy toward China since Tiananmen Square ought to raise serious doubts.

The dirty little secret, of course, is that many of those who support a new policy of engagement with Castro know perfectly well that, far from undermining him, it will help him stay in power. And this, from their point of view, would not be such a bad thing. Like Castro, they prefer stability to upheaval on the island because upheaval means refugees and pressure for U.S. intervention. Even while declaring the current embargo futile and obsolete, supporters of an engagement strategy sometimes let slip their deeper fear that the contrary may be true. Rep. Lee Hamilton calls the current policy "risky, because the more pressure you apply the more likely you make it that [the Cuban people] will turn to violence, and we do not want this to happen." Even Bernard Aronson, a sincere opponent of the Castro regime, agrees that the goal of U.S. policy should be to "help ensure that the inevitable change coming to Cuba will be peaceful rather than violent and traumatic." And at the Pentagon, a recent study concluded that gradual economic liberalization in Cuba would be preferable, from the U.S. point of view, to a violent domestic challenge to Castro's rule and even to more radical economic reforms under Castro's leadership.

Castro has long admired the ability of Chinese

The current policy of embargo may be boring and unimaginative. More significantly, it offers no answer to the problem of refugees, except letting more in or taking unpleasant measures on the high seas to keep them out. It promises Castro no bribes in exchange for stability. But it does have its simple virtues. For one thing, the current policy is honest about its goals and its proposed means for achieving them. And, although few seem to realize this, it plays to American strengths while the proposed policy of engagement plays to Castro's. The United States is the most powerful country in the world, but its foreign policy instruments tend to be big and blunt. Our ability to influence the decisions of international investors is enormous, as is our ability to keep Cuba in a state of relative political and diplomatic isolation. But this capacity to manipulate power on the world stage is not matched by an equal facility in manipulating power in Cuba. In that game, Castro has the advantage.

Perhaps we would be better off keeping our policy simple. Already the embargo is forcing Castro to make difficult choices; maybe we should hold out until he makes the most difficult choice of all. It is worth recalling that the Bush administration did not lift economic sanctions against Nicaragua until *after* the Sandinistas held free elections. The Reagan administration did not lift sanctions against Pinochet's Chile until the dictator agreed to hold a plebiscite. Why not hold the world's most successful dictator to the same high standard? Let's start at the top of the ladder, not the bottom. ♦

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The Gay-Play Decade

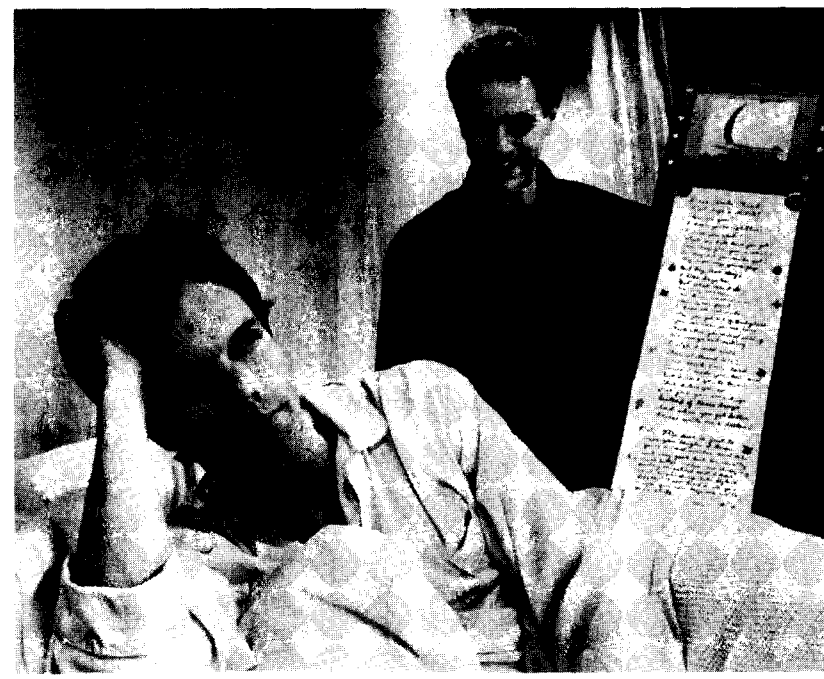
By Donald Lyons

Back in 1955, *New Republic* drama critic Eric Bentley was actually able to write these words: "I was praised recently for having intimated that there was too much homosexuality in current plays, but what I meant to imply was that there was not enough. Having gone so far, our playwrights will have to go further; having inflicted the subject on us, they will have to say something about it."

Forty years later, American playwrights seem to be able to talk of little else. Indeed, gay life has become the major subject of the American play. The last three Tony winners—Tony Kushner's two *Angels in America* dramas and Terrence McNally's *Love! Valour! Compassion!*—are about gays. Off-Broadway is stuffed with titles like *2 Boys in a Bed on a Cold Winter's Night*, *Party*, and *the only thing worse you could have told me* . . . .

If this is gay theater's high noon, the moment of its sunrise can be pinpointed precisely: April 14, 1968, the evening when *The Boys in the Band* opened in New York. Mart Crowley's amazingly influential play chose the place, set the tone, and established the content of much that was to come. The set-up of *The Boys in the Band* and its followers is almost invariably this: a group of New York-dwelling, middle-agey gay pals (the canonical number is eight, but it can vary) gather to celebrate an event and wind up assessing their lives. Where they gather is key as well; it must be New York or a vacation suburb thereof, as New York is classically the residence, the refuge, and the magnet for the gay artist, especially the theatrical artist. New York and its theater are at the heart of these self-regarding plays. And the focus is not on theater in general—these plays are not full of knowing allusions to Chekhov or Ibsen—but the Broadway musical. The musical is the religion of these guys (dolls rarely being in evidence in the gay play). They know its history minutely, and expect everyone else to be as knowledgeable. They derive their only solace from it. As foil for these mavens, there is the dumb young hunk. The hunk is desired by all, even as he is patronized and parodied for his ignorance of show-biz trivia.

In 1968, Crowley's characters got drunk and "faced the truth about themselves." Alcoholism and self-loathing were the big issues: "You're a homosexual and you don't want to be" was a crucial barb. By the mid-80s, when the real school of gay playwriting got under way, the world had changed. In the 70s, the personal became the political, the psychic became the civic. The reigning culture urged people to isolate one aspect of their life—race, sexual preference—to identify their self with it, and make demands on the body politic in its name. In the early 80s came the AIDS epidemic, rapidly politicized and viewed almost exclusively as a vehicle for political oppression by the heterosexual world. Gay playwrights added a new twist to the Crowley formula: Among the group of gay men, a healthy character deserts a sick lover, then relents and agrees to at least nurse, at most



Gerry Goodstein

William M. Hoffman's As Is

Donald Lyons is a theater critic for the Wall Street Journal.

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have sex with, a dying and contagious man.

William M. Hoffman's *As Is* was the first major AIDS play, and features a scene that would later appear in the movie *Longtime Companion*, the work of gay playwright Craig Lucas: A group of gays sit around and recollect where each was when he first heard of the disease. The central story of *As Is* involves a gay couple, one of whom has AIDS. This longtime couple is noisily separating at the start, but by the end the nicer, healthy guy has vowed to stick by his embittered, difficult, stricken partner. In *As Is*, doctors and the health establishment in general are cold and uncaring, while fellow gays and gay support groups provide all the warmth and care. To its credit, *As Is* made a stab at revealing the causes of the illness with an expressionistic depiction of 70s-style nocturnal promiscuity, but even that modest level of candor soon became taboo in the gay play as AIDS was transmogrified into a biochemical assault on the gay world by the Republican party.

The Normal Heart, Larry Kramer's 1985 play, took the *As Is* recipe and for the first time added the agit-prop that soon became another staple of the gay play. Kramer, a screenwriter and founder of the gay pressure group ACT-UP, offered an autobiographical stand-in, Ned Weeks, who goes to a clinic to be tested and falls in love with a *New York Times* reporter. He urges the reporter to print more AIDS news. Ned harangues his straight lawyer brother to do pro bono AIDS work. The rhetoric of the play consists of loud lectures by Ned on the order of: "Do you know that when Hitler's final solution to eliminate the Polish Jews was first mentioned in the *Times* it was on page 28?" He tells his poor brother, "You and your straight world are our enemy. I am furious with you and with myself and with every other goddamned doctor who ever told me I'm sick and interfered with my loving a man."

William Gibson

Paul Rudnick's Jeffrey

Much of Ned's fury is directed against the *Times* and then-New York Mayor Ed Koch, with Koch coming in for some very nasty gay-baiting remarks. The newspaper and the mayor are Kramer's King Charles's Heads; the playwright's faith in their ability to cope with AIDS if only they'd take his advice seems the sad product of an upbringing in a culture that thought evil could be kept at bay by a good liberal newspaper and a good liberal mayor.

With an uncritical self-absorption that transcends mere egomania, Kramer staged a confrontation between Ned and the more politic successor who is about to expel the abrasive founder from his activist organization. How dare you, cries Ned, screaming: "I belong to a culture that includes Proust." He goes on to list 23 familiar suspects in the gay canon (including Alexander the Great, presumably brought into the gay sphere by his tutor, Aristotle). The final scenes show a calmer Ned tending and marrying the reporter, who is dying of AIDS.

The Normal Heart is advocacy virtually unmasticated into art, and when it does try to become a play, it is not very interesting. Perversely, the passages of raw journalistic, forensic fury are better, or at least more original, theater. In 1992 Kramer wrote a sequel to *The Normal Heart* called *The Destiny of Me* (the second title is from Whitman; the earlier title is Auden's; both names figure on Ned Weeks's list, natch). Ned, now himself ill, summons up the spirits of his mother, his brother, and his younger, innocent self, called Alexander, and picks fights with them. *The Destiny of Me* recalls not (as some generous reviewers proposed) masterpieces like Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* or Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* but a lesser example of the family play like Clifford Odets's 1935 *Awake and Sing*. What capitalism was for Odets (the prized dramatist of New York communists and fellow-travelers of the Depression era), anti-homosexual prejudice is for Kramer. Ned warns his younger self against shrinks: "While they teach you to love yourself they will also teach you to hate your [homosexual] heart."

He asks his aged mother about her long-ago sex life; she wisely replies, "Our lives weren't about sex. Is sex what controls your life?" Ned's sissy-bashing dad is pretty severely judged, but an attempt to understand him is made, and Ned does credit his parents' wrongdoing with having made him a writer. Ned and his brother achieve a genuine rapport, finally singing a lyric from *Show Boat* about loving yourself.

By the late 1980s, gay playwrights with their eyes on the middlebrow Broadway theater audience became eager to project a positive image, and so they began creating utopian images of "fami-

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ly," islands of happy tolerance in a sea of despair.

Some of these works, like Richard Greenberg's *Eastern Standard* and Terrence McNally's *Lips Together Teeth Apart*, mixed gays and straights at a Crowley-like gathering. In *Eastern Standard*, a brother and sister pair off with two guys who used to be roommates at Dartmouth. All the characters sport upscale professions (architect, investment counselor, painter, TV producer) and are beset by liberal guilt about selling out in these professions and not contributing to the construction of a better world. The architect decides to quit his swank firm and build housing for the homeless. But while the straight couple is falling smoothly in love and making marriage plans, gay producer Peter is being finicky and recalcitrant about committing to the smitten gay artist Drew, who cries, "You tantalize! You make people fall in love with you without the remotest intention of returning it."

We know what the problem is, for Peter had spilled the beans to Sis about AIDS earlier. Late in the last act, he fesses up, telling Drew, "*I'm sick*. . . . The funny part is, you probably would have been the love of my life."

Cut to the last scene, where Drew is making happy paintings ("Your peers will shun you") and assuring Peter he will leave him only "when you aren't there any more."

"I'm going to look like hell."

"I'm planning not to notice."

The I-won't-leave-you AIDS scene appears in almost every play, and is especially perfect for a banal writer like Greenberg, who earnestly prescribes yesterday's liberal nostrums. He was compared by an enraptured Frank Rich, then the *New York Times* drama critic, to Philip Barry, who in the 1930s mixed sexy cocktails of aristocratic impudence and idealism. But in truth, *Eastern Standard* was considerably closer to TV's *Friends* than to *The Philadelphia Story*.

In 1994's *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, Terrence McNally finally gives the gay play its perfect shape. It follows eight gay men through three summer weekends in a haven just north of New York City. The house belongs to a serious choreographer who, we are told, is a genius. Other artsy types include a composer, a costumer, and a dancer. As foils to them, there's an unconvincing lawyer-businessman pair and two dumb hunks. Onstage nudity, now a trope of the gay play, finds its full expression in *Love! Valour!* Here, the two younger "boyfriend" characters get naked early, and everybody goes skinnydipping.

The group's center, its Ariel, is Buzz, who lives for old musicals: "It isn't trivial to me. . . . I can contain the world of the Broadway musical. Get my hands around it, so to speak. Be the master of one little universe." (This pathology of cultural fanaticism appears as well in an earlier McNally play, *The Lisbon Traviata*, in which his characters live and die for the voice of diva Maria Callas.)

McNally is savvy enough, at least, to offer a farcical treatment of some aspects of gay correctness; Buzz is particularly funny on the subject of outing. But the author cannot bring himself to make light of AIDS, which it turns out both Buzz and another housemate have; the disease brings them together and they share a session of lesion comparison (another favorite scene, also present way back in *As Is*). McNally even splices in a moment of political anger, a scene where the men watch cops nightstick gay demonstrators on TV ("What is wrong with this country? They hate us").

Paul Rudnick's 1993 *Jeffrey* (recently released as a film) takes two gay-play themes—you've got to live in Manhattan and you've got to love a guy with AIDS—and pushes them to fanatical extremes. The premise is that Jeffrey, a thirtysomething waiter/actor, gives up sex out of fear of AIDS. Aristophanes endorsed a similar stratagem on the part of his Lysistrata, but here Jeffrey is attacked for his decision—with Rudnick's blessing—by all the forces of gay culture. First, he meets a possible lover in the gym, a guy named Steve, but he holds back ("I said no sex and I meant it! . . . I am the new Jeffrey, no longer a slave to my libido"). This vow, as we know from familiarity with this genre and with the larger field of romantic comedy, is taken only in order to be broken.

Jeffrey's friend/counselor Sterling is the voice of hedonism, of gay activism and gay indulgence, urging Jeffrey to surrender. Sterling's love is the young moron beloved of the genre ("Who's Ann Miller?"), but this one is not totally ignorant of musical comedy, as he plays a cat in *Cats*.

Steve pursues; Jeffrey flees; Steve announces he's HIV-positive; Jeffrey recoils. "I'm sorry it's not 10 years ago, and I'm sorry that life is suddenly radioactive," he says, and is thus deserving of the beating he receives later at the hands of thugs. Steve has fun with AIDS, entertaining Jeffrey at St. Vincent's hospital with a syringe-and-bedpan fashion show before didactically intoning, "We're all AIDS babies, Jeffrey."

Jeffrey seeks to firm up his resolve by phoning his parents in Wisconsin, but his subconscious plays tricks on him, and he hears them advising him to indulge himself sexually in the most lurid terms. Stumbling into the cathedral for a shot of fortitude, he encounters a horny priest who tries to pick him up and offers the only religion permissible in gay theater: "The

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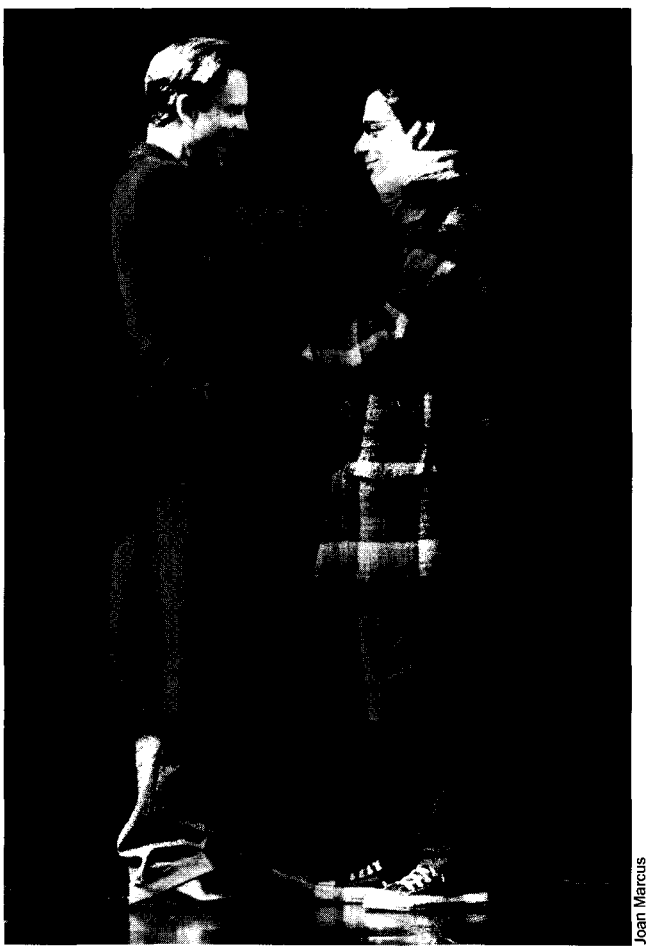
only times I really feel the presence of God are when I'm having sex and during a great Broadway musical." The priest defines Satan as Andrew Lloyd Webber (okay, that *is* funny) and insists on the urgency, the necessity of having sex: "How dare you not lunge for any shred of happiness?"

In his introduction to the play, Rudnick solemnly swears that he "never intended this episode as Catholic bashing." This seems disingenuous in light of the priest's definition of Christianity as "worshipping resurrections, virgin births, Ben-Hur," and of a Catholic priest as "somewhere between chorus boy and florist."

Jeffrey decides to go back to Wisconsin—an idea that demonstrates just how far he has sunk into error. Such an exile from the gay paradise is not his only treason against gaydom: Jeffrey does his laundry instead of marching on Gay Pride Day! Going to the hospital to offer Sterling condolences on the death of his lover, Jeffrey is rebuffed by the righteous widower: "You are not part of this." The dead boyfriend appears to Jeffrey to deliver the play's fortune-cookie motto: "Hate AIDS, Jeffrey, not life." This works. Jeffrey sees the light, becomes proud of who he is—"I'm a gay man, and I live in New York"—and begs Steve for sex: "Could we have sex? Safe sex? Some kind of sex? Tonight?"

Rudnick, author of the screenplays to the *Addams Family* movies, is a specialist in the detachable wisecrack, but he cannot even construct character on the light comic level mastered by McNally. He has, for example, the aesthete Sterling say things like, "I'm sorry, those students in Tiananmen Square were very misguided. Where were the graphics?" without being aware of the repellent moral tone-deafness such lines reveal.



Joan Marcus

Tony Kushner's Angels in America: Perestroika

There is, above all, in "Jeffrey" the unmistakable tone of the cultural bully, condemning all those who will not live in New York, who will not have sex with seropositives, who do not love musicals and talk in wisecracks. Celibacy is a joke; religion is hypocrisy.

In the most celebrated works yet in the annals of gay theater—*Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches* and *Part Two: Perestroika*—Tony Kushner abandons *some* formulas. His central figure, Louis, cares nothing for musical comedy, and after deserting his dying-of-AIDS longtime lover, he does not return. Kushner has digested enough Bertolt Brecht to know to alienate the spectator a bit from his vehicle—Louis is not the most winning authorial stand-in you've ever met. But he is wholly correct when it comes to political inquisition. Louis, like his creator, regards American anticommunism as the fount of all ills, denounces the Reagan family, and says to his new lover, law-clerk Joe, "You're nice, I can't believe you voted for Reagan." Joe works for Roy Cohn, a recent and imperfect historical personage whom Kushner tries to work up into a Volpone-like dervish of evil. Cohn's mortal sins seem to have been, in Kushner's eyes, being an anticommunist and being in the closet.

Kushner has a doctor reveal his impending death from AIDS to a Cohn deep in denial; he resurrects Ethel Rosenberg, not known for piety, to summon an ambulance for Cohn and later on to say the Jewish prayer of mourning over him. Kushner's indeed was the first play to depict with something like relish an AIDS death. When it's Roy Cohn, I suppose it doesn't count.

The affair between Louis and Joe doesn't last after Louis discovers Joe has been assisting in the writing of conservative legal opinions. In a fierce and unintentional-

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ly hilarious paroxysm of denunciation, Louis cites opinion after opinion he disagrees with, including the one favoring "the toothpaste-makers whose orange-colored smoke was *blinding* children." So Republican Joe gets the boot and does not get to participate in the final gathering of the new tribe of the chosen, gay men alive and dead, at the Bethesda Fountain in New York's Central Park. Here Louis's dead lover, now an angel, appears and announces that "this disease will be the end of many of us, but not nearly all . . . we are not going away . . . We will be citizens. The time has come." What this tumid rhetoric actually means is anybody's guess. Gay marriage laws? President Barney Frank? Best not to get specific, though; windy portentousness is the whole point. The desperate longing for utopian good news, the search for a more convenient family than the one we all grew up in, took a ridiculous apocalyptic turn in *Angels*.

For a decade or more, these ways of discussing gay life have dominated the cultural conversation in American theater, with the virtually unanimous endorsement of the mandarins. The politics of identity and the culture of victimization have produced a theater of identity and victimization. And a theater of pride and blame is no theater at all. Once everybody gets together in or near New York for a party, and says they're proud to be gay, and affirms that their gay friends are their real family, and sings songs from many obscure musicals, and takes off their clothes, and agrees to have a lot of sex despite AIDS (which is a big Republican plot anyway), there's nowhere to go but into sentimental cliche and political posturing of the most obvious sort.

It is perhaps time for playwrights, straight and gay, to abandon identity art and look to the great sources of artistic vitality, above all family. Think of such achievements by straight and gay playwrights as *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Death of a Salesman*, even Edward Albee's recent *Three Tall Women*. Albee, one of the first uncloseted gay writers in America, has created his masterpiece not by writing about his sex life, but by studying his odd and difficult mother.

When people become their sexual identity and their sexual identity alone, they are diminished as people. And when characters are nothing but sexual types, the plays that surround them are drained of life and meaning. For an artist, homosexuality can only be treated successfully when it is one color in a personality, not its totality. Good critical advice comes from Emily Dickinson: "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—Success in Circuit lies." ♦

Books

Newt Wrote It. I Should Know.

By William Tucker

The House Ethics Committee is reportedly seeking a special prosecutor to pursue the case against Speaker Newt Gingrich for committing ethical violations while writing his best-selling book, *To Renew America*. The thesis is that he improperly used non-partisan funds from the Progress and Freedom Foundation to teach a "partisan" course at Rinehart College in Georgia last January and February. The materials in this course then became the basis of *To Renew America*, published shortly afterward. Since Gingrich is making several million dollars from the book, he is accused of enriching himself while violating federal tax laws.

As the person who helped Gingrich write the book, I have been anxiously awaiting my summons to appear before the Ethics Committee—perhaps, I thought, my story might be relevant. As the hearings fade from view, however, it has become obvious that I will not be asked to testify. The more I think of it, the more I suspect there is probably good reason. My story is probably the antithesis of what Gingrich's enemies want to hear.

I signed on to the project in February 1995, after two previous co-writers dropped off the job. Both authors had the same problems: 1) the uncertainty of the long payback period (I put up $4,000 on travel and expenses and have yet to receive my first check); and 2) the problems of creating a book out of the Speaker's diffuse and often desultory oratorical style.

The book, it was suggested, should be written by spending long hours of "quality time" with Gingrich while tape-recording his remarks. These conversations would then be transcribed into written form. (This is how Rush Limbaugh's best-sellers were written.) I met Gingrich once in his office in late February. He bought me dinner at the House Dining Room and gave me a copy of a handwritten two-page chapter out-

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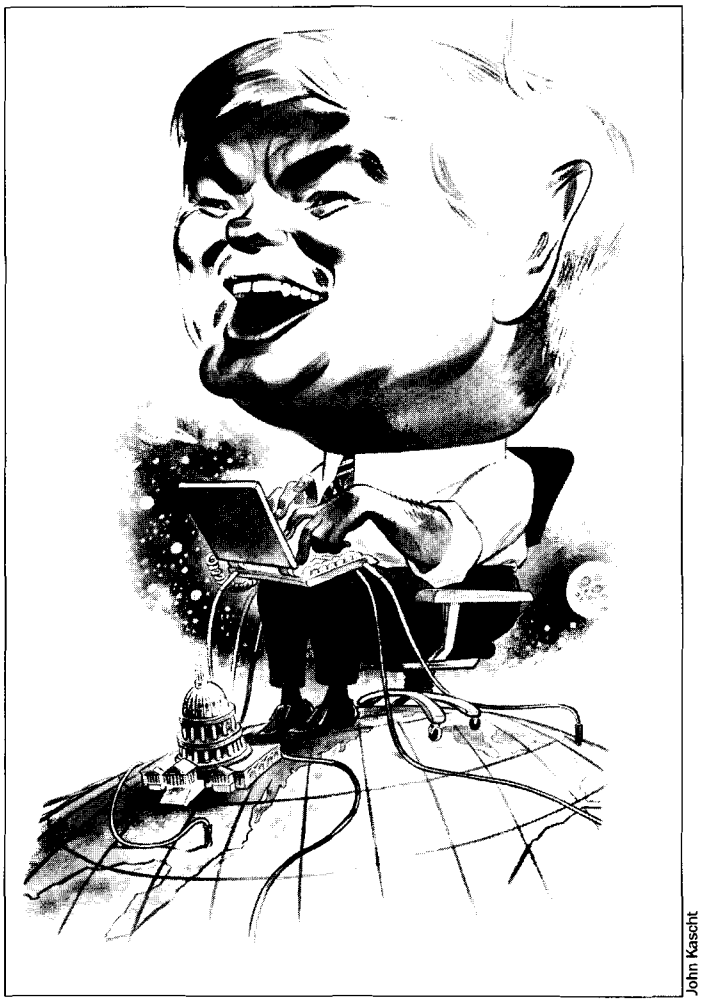
line worked out with the publisher a month before—paying 25 cents to his staff to avoid illegal use of his office's copying machine. We set up a block of time on Sunday evenings for long phone conversations that would supposedly get the book under way.

Someone had suggested we start with a few fictionalized paragraphs of an America 50 years hence, as imagined by Newt. Somehow, this fantasy took on a life of its own. With boyish enthusiasm, we began imagining what America would be like in the year 2045. Before we knew it, we had three chapters. Adrian Zackheim, our editor at HarperCollins, heard about it and went through the roof. That was not the book we were supposed to be writing, he thundered. Chagrined, we went back to the drawing board.

I began collecting Gingrich's speeches and papers, and encountered both the tapes and transcripts of Gingrich's Rinehart College lectures. Anyone who spent a few hours perusing this material (and I didn't spend much more) would know immediately that it is essentially useless.

The course was as much a self-help regimen as it was an exploration of American history. At one point, Gingrich had his 100-odd students spend a week keeping track of their time in order to see how much they wasted (an exercise suggested by Peter Drucker). Another homework assignment was to list 10 things you would recommend to an immigrant just arriving in America.

All this made entertaining classroom discussion, but was hardly the material for a book. Much more relevant was *Window of Opportunity*, the Speaker's 1985 manifesto (now a collector's item on the remainder circuit). The book anticipates many of the major themes of *To Renew America* and is argued in finer detail. Unfortunately, I couldn't locate a copy until most of our book was finished, so it only served antiquarian interest.



John Kascht

On St. Patrick's Day, Zackheim, Gingrich, and I had our first joint meeting at HarperCollins's offices in New York. We had abandoned the Sunday-night telephone format, and I was writing a rough draft of the first six chapters—the "six challenges facing America"—based on some of my own research. At a conference that included one of the marketing executives, I asked Gingrich if there had been any defining moment in his political evolution. He replied quickly that it was his visit to the Verdun cemetery at age 14. I suggested he use this incident as the starting point for an introductory chapter. Within a week, Gingrich turned in an excellent draft. I felt quite proud of having elicited this recollection from the Speaker—until I read the same memoir in *Window of Opportunity* and realized he has repeated it dozens of times.

At the same meeting it was decided that the book would also include a memoir of the 1994 campaign and the First 100 Days, plus "position papers" on several key issues (the list eventually grew to 17). This was an ambitious undertaking. Frankly, I suspected little of it would ever get done. HarperCollins must have had the same thoughts because they began quietly telling me to "go ahead and write the book yourself" just in case the Speaker didn't come through. Publication was set in stone for July 1. (The book had to fit into a "window of opportunity" that would end with the publication of Colin Powell's autobiography September 10.) Our absolute deadline was May 1, six weeks away. The Speaker had yet to put one word to paper.

Over the next three weeks I fin-

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ished drafts of the six "challenge-to-America" chapters. They reflected my plodding, academic style rather than the Speaker's more enthusiastic pace, and word filtered back that he didn't like them very much. Still, with Congress in session, nothing else got done. When Congress finally recessed on April 10, I flew to Marietta for a final block of "quality time" in which the entire book was to be finished.

When I arrived, Gingrich was just learning to use his laptop. Techno-enthusiast that he is, Newt still knew next to nothing about word-processing. My wife, who is the computer expert of our family, talked him through a few early crises over the phone. I knew just enough to reassure him that, no, he probably hadn't lost that last four hours of work, and the file was certainly in there *somewhere*, if we could only remember under what name he filed it and in which directory. Only barely literate myself, I became the sage computer adviser to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Over the first three days, Newt wrote his own versions of my six "challenge" chapters and handed them to me for editing. Then he tackled his recollections of the Contract and the 100 Days—a 25,000-word effort that took two days.

Now it was on to the 17 "position papers." Zackheim had arrived, and under his guidance Newt made his first assay—"English as the American Language." It came out 45 typewritten pages. We urged him to shoot for eight. He went back in the kitchen and wrote the next essay—"Individual Versus Group Rights"—eight pages, letter-perfect. I went back to editing the first six chapters and lost track of what Newt was doing. Zackheim set up a printer on the dining room table, ordered out for meals, and began line-editing.

When I left Marietta on April 20, we had nearly-completed versions of the first six chapters. The memoir of the Contract with America and the 100 Days was in rough draft that looked substantial enough to be boiled down. As I was leaving, Gingrich handed me two additional disks. Not until I arrived home did I realize that he had composed all 17 "issue" chapters, none in need of very much editing.

I spent the next 10 days editing and checking facts. Zackheim went to Washington to coordinate the traffic on different manuscripts and tend to the fine details. The concluding chapter—Newt's account of his first experience in public life at age 12—was conceived as he and Zackheim took a midnight stroll through the Capitol Rotunda—a very moving experience, according to Zackheim. It became one of the best chapters in the book.

Before publication, every reporter who approached me came armed with the moral certainty that the book had been ghost-written or patched together from old materials. Margaret Carlson of *Time* had a quote from someone saying the book had been completely ghosted. After I spent a half-hour trying to convince her that Newt had written the bulk himself, she reported: "ghostwriter Bill Tucker went to Gingrich's home in Marietta, Georgia, and extracted 70,000 words from the Speaker," and "according to advance word, *1945* [Newt's other book, which Carlson was also panning] is a work of art compared with *To Renew America*, which was written in about two weeks." She had not yet read a single page.

Since publication, there have been few accusations that the book was ghost-written—or even composed in haste. It is too complete and too representative of Newt's thinking to have been written by anyone else. Comments and criticisms have been limited to the substance—which is exactly how it should be.

All of us who worked together on the project were absolutely astounded by Gingrich's ability to put words on paper once he got the hang of it and became comfortable with the word-processor. Anyone familiar with his speeches and writings knows he has been thinking seriously about these issues for nearly 20 years. The only difference is that people are now listening.

The Speaker has written a book that resonates with the American people. Some members of the House Ethics Committee remain determined to prove this was an illegal and immoral act. I suspect they will end up wishing they had made better use of their time. ♦

Sports

Lose the Save

By Christopher Caldwell

People who don't follow the Cleveland Indians baseball team too closely were introduced to José Mesa last week when he strode to the mound in the first game of the American League division series. Mesa is the hard-throwing Indians "closer"—a pitcher brought into a game in the late innings to preserve his team's lead. Mesa has just put together the greatest (statistical) season a closer has ever had: 46 saves in 48 "save opportunities." There are plenty of people, not just Cleveland sportswriters like Bud Shaw, who think

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he deserves the American League Most Valuable Player Award for it.

That would be outrageous. The save is a close relative of the "hurry" in football, or baseball's late, unlamented "game-winning RBI" —a bogus statistic that measures little of value. The save, in fact, has wrecked relief pitching. It ought to be scrapped.

Saves are too easy. Take a third-rate closer, someone who gives up an average of, say, four runs a game. Suppose this stiff appears in 50 or 60 games, all in the ninth inning. He gives up three runs in a few games; two runs in a few more; one run in more still; and in most outings doesn't give up any runs at all. The games in which he gives up the three runs he'll lose, but chances are the team will win when he gives up one run or even two. It's easy to see how this closer might finish the year with the awesome-looking record of 45 saves—all for having a lousy season. This is basically the story of Baltimore's fat old Doug Jones (22 saves), and California's rickety Lee Smith (37).

Second, some saves are easier than others. You can get a save if you throw just one pitch with your team ahead by two runs with two men out in the ninth inning. You get the same save for genuine heroics: coming into a game with a mere one-run lead in the sixth inning, no men out and opposing runners on second and third base, whereupon you strike out the side, and then mow down the whole batting order over the last three innings.

To put a quality closer into a risky game, or to use him earlier than the ninth, is to endanger his statistics and his paycheck. So the best relievers no longer pitch in the most dramatic situations, and they're overused in easy, mop-up situations. Statistical fetishism interacts with baseball's salary-arbitration system to turn relievers into prima donnas. In the last week of the 1988 season, Lee Smith, then with the Red Sox, was one game away from becoming the first ever to save 30 games five seasons in a row. When manager Joe Morgan failed to use him in a "save situation," Smith vandalized the clubhouse.

The glory of relief pitching comes when a manager sends in his freshest arm to rescue a close ballgame. The electrifying relievers of the modern era—Dick Radatz of the 1960s Red Sox, Sparky Lyle of the 1970s Yankees—were constantly sent into multiple-baserunner

situations in tight ballgames. Manager Tommy Lasorda of the Dodgers still manages this way, bringing in his best relievers when they're needed, not when it's okay with their accountants.

Take the game he sent Todd Worrell (31 saves, 2.02 ERA) into on May 23 against the New York Mets at Shea Stadium. The Dodgers were two runs ahead with the bases loaded and none out in the eighth. Worrell struck out Ricky Otero, and got Edgardo Alfonzo and Brett Butler to foul out. In the ninth, he struck out two, retired the side in order, and put a halt to a six-game losing streak. *That's* a fireman. So a Dodger reliever doesn't have the numbers other closers do (the team record was 28 until this year). But also note that the Dodgers once again made the playoffs, despite perennially anemic hitting.

The state-of-the-art relief-pitching regimen, by contrast, is the one Oakland A's manager Tony La Russa has prescribed for his closer Dennis Eckersley since the late 1980s—bringing him in at least 90 percent of the time with nobody on base in the ninth. This isn't rescue, it's coasting. It's like a boxer running up his knockout record by fighting patsies.

Indians manager Mike Hargrove has followed La Russa's model, not Lasorda's, and that makes Mesa's save totals much less impressive. Of his 46 saves this year, only one came in a game he entered with runners on base. That was in the first week of the season in a game the Indians led 5-1. The next time Hargrove used Mesa with runners on base was four months later on September 3 in Tiger Stadium. Again, Mesa had a four-run lead. With the bases loaded and one out in the bottom of the ninth, he faced catcher Ron Tingley, who drove Mesa's second pitch into the right-field seats.

Mesa is a gutsy reliever who's had a fine season. But the (weak) case for making him the American League MVP is to be found in a reliable old statistic: his ERA of 1.13, which shows how tough he is to hit. Not his saves, which measure little more than the pampering of his manager.

Enough. While baseball purists rightly decry the designated-hitter rule 20 years after it was first instituted, why has there been no uprising about the corruption of pitching? ♦

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Parody

LARRY KING'S PEOPLE

News & Views

LATE ITEMS: What a V-party **Johnnie Cochran** tossed for his most famous client at the Rockingham digs after the acquittal. V as in Victory. V as in va-vaa-voom (you know **Tawny Kitaen** just had to be there)! **Yours truly** was the only ink-stained wretch invited ... Champagne time, my friends. The celebration cake was out of this world — four tiers of marzipan courtesy of **Mezzaluna's** bakery in Brentwood. Fabulous waiters there, by the by. And blintzes to die for... When **Johnnie** called out, "Don't let **O.J.** cut the cake!" I thought **A.C. Cowlings** would bust a gut. ...

And yes, that was **O.J.**'s old Bronco **A.C.** arrived in. The **clowns** at **LAPD** finally released it from custody. Says **A.C.:** "It's almost as good as new. Best of all, they didn't find the $100,000 cash we left in the glove compartment!" What a card ...

Lots of talk at **O.J.**'s about those polls showing blacks and whites divided over the verdict ... And speaking of **Poles** ... the **Pope's** a big fan of mine, apparently. Vatican insiders say he wants to be booked on my show next Tuesday ... Sorry, **Your Holiness**, it's a no-go. A very special limo driver by the name of **Alan Parks** is already booked ... and it promises to be a very hot show. ...

... And speaking of bookings: Watch for **O.J.** to follow up his blockbuster *I Want to Tell You* — a very crisp read, by the way. Working title of sequel: *I Won't Tell You and You Can't Make Me* ... Movie of the week, anyone?

KING'S THINGS: Those answering machines with the looooooong beeps ... Gloves that shrink when they get the teeniest bit wet. ...

BACK TO PARTYTIME: Good to see the **Juice** hasn't lost that goofy sense of humor. True story: We're by the pool at Rockingham. Lots of sunshine. Water. Concrete. Those big California plants with the creepy leaves. A couple of gin fizzes. **Juice** leans over to me: "**Larry**," he says, "do I have to pay **Robert Shapiro** now?" Rim shot. ...

OOH-LA-LA: No word yet on future relationship plans for the **Juice** and former flame **Paula Barbieri**. "Gentlemen prefer blondes, **Larry**," **O.J.** says to **me**, with a wink. ... Word to you would-be matchmakers: Slow down, folks. Give the man some space — hey, he just lost his wife a year ago! Let the grieving process go forward. ...

Watch for O.J. and Louis Farrakhan live from the Million-Man March on the Oct. 16 Larry King Live.

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